

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

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Interpreting the Script

In attempts to simmer down I am
circling the droopy-needed pine tree
rooted in the Marriott Courtyard
wondering aloud, why am I here
so far from home, husband, and puppy?

As if on cue, from out between the
fragrant curtains of that tree breezes
through one bumblebee dancing her circle.

In awe, focusing my newly aware
eyes on the holy, bee two intersects

the solo performance of bee one
before noting there is a troupe of
four, then six, all intersecting
wildly like spirograph artistry.

As of yet, not one is seen running
into another or choreographing

distinct movements, or demanding
an explanation of what they are doing
for this audience that has come to see.

Simply delightful to view, revving
up, shaking their bee-booties

yellow and black stripes shimmering
before the curtain is drawn with the
last light of dusk and they rest for this night.

And so it happens that I see God as
known in the bee script spelling
clearly, "Dear one, I love you."

John 4:5-15

To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. He came into Sychar, a Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was still there. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon.

A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, "Would you give me a drink of water?" (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

The woman said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life." The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so I won't ever get thirsty, won't ever have to come back to this well again!"

This week I flew to Atlanta for a conference. Just seeing the title, "Write for Your Life," excited me and was magnified by the headliner Barbara Brown Taylor. We were all thrilled to be in the same room with her! An Episcopal priest who has authored many books and whose website title sums up her writings:

"Hello, I'm Barbara Brown Taylor. I say things you're not supposed to say."

All the presenters provided helpful information on how to publish your work either independently or through a publishing house. It's complicated. It's nearly impossible, but doable with a good plan and frequent prayers.

Every so often it seems important to put myself in an unpredictable situation, to risk feeling uncomfortable before making new friends. I knew to keep my eyes open for glimpses of God and was not disappointed when the bumblebees appeared after entering the hotel courtyard the first evening.

The next day I would discover that many of the participants were also first-timers and interested in hearing one another's stories. Partnering and supporting one another is important in order to bring healing and empathy into the world. Many of us are introverted folks, each with a passion for sharing what God had given them to pass along to others.

Humans and spirituality go hand in hand. Sometimes we really feel thirsty and say it aloud. How blessed we are when Jesus meets us at the well and offers the living water so that we will never again thirst. Keep your eyes open for those who are parched and need to drink from the well.

Ponder this: have you found that being the calming presence of one who regularly drinks of the living waters brings a sense of God's peace to your soul as well?

If we come to the well, we are given what we need for each moment. May we keep open our eyes, ears, and sense of touch and smell, to the world around us. God is here!

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Each week, a timely message and scripture are available simply by making a phone call.