

"Steep Your Life" 2/27 /2011
 Isaiah 40:8-16a, Matthew 6:24-34

Kenmore UMC
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Grounding/steeping our lives in God enables us to know God's provision, which frees us to respond to God's giving with selfless living.

I often call Bonnie the Queen of the silver lining. In the midst of my anxiety and fussing about something, she sees the silver lining in the cloud of dark despair. Just this last Friday, after being in the office all morning, and a quiet morning it was because of all the snow, even the piecemakers and the craftsmen had canceled their gatherings and now we had to run home, to get the other car so she could get to her luncheon meeting with a friend, and I could get to a Doctor's appointment. Delaware Rd and Highland and Colvin were not bad to drive on, but I just knew West Grimsby would be unplowed, Bonnie said it would be fine.

I turned the corner and we were both right, it had been plowed, but about three hours before so it had 4 or 5 inches of snow on it, but it was drivable. Then we got to the parsonage where we live, and saw the plow had put about two feet or more of plowed snow at the foot of the driveway. You could barely walk through it let alone drive through it. So I said we'll never get your car out of the driveway and she said, that maybe true but we don't have to brush the snow off of it because it has been in the garage.

I have to tell you, snow blowers are wonderful things, we got the driveway cleared, she called and was only a little late for her luncheon meeting and I made my doctor's appointment just on time. My fussing had not helped at all and her silver lining kept her blood pressure down. Mine went up because telling a fusser to see the silver lining drives me nuts.

But that is the point, all my worrying did nothing to clear the driveway, and her knowing that being a little late was not the ultimate catastrophe, freed us to do what we had to do and get to where we had to go.

This is a God given gift, it is remembering all the ways God has cared for us in the past and all that God will reveal to us in the future.

No wonder Jesus challenges his disciples then and now, in this section of the Sermon on the Mount to lift their eyes beyond the shadows of the earth to see the light of God's eternity.

Do not worry about your life.

Serve God, not money; seek God and God's justice and righteousness and all these things will be given you as well.

Remember, the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Remember, worrying has not added one moment to your lifespan, nor has it moved one shovel full of snow.

The key to not worrying, fussing and being anxious lies not in our will power, but in our memory, our vision and our hearts. ***Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.***

When Robert Louis Stevenson, racked by tuberculosis, was nearing the end of his life, his wife came in one morning and said, "I suppose in spite of all your trouble, you will tell me again that it is a beautiful day."

The great novelist answered, "Yes, my dear. I refuse to let that row of medicine bottles be the circumference of my horizon."

I will always remember the story of the man, who was gravely ill, lying in a hospital bed for weeks. His roommate had the bed by the window. When he was feeling really down over his life and his illness he would ask his roommate to tell him what it was like outside, and he would describe the sun shining, the park across the road with children playing and the trees swaying in a gentle breeze and the beautiful gardens in the park.

The man was comforted and grateful, and a little jealous that he couldn't see the beauty outside the window. Finally the man by the window went home, and the other man quickly asked if he would be moved to the window bed, so he could open the curtain and behold the beauty. He was moved and he opened the curtain, only to discover it actually looked out on a brick wall, with the barest of sunshine coming in. It turns out the other man was blind, and shared with the gravely ill man a vision of what he needed to see.

The sunshine of God's love, the joy of a little child leading them to the wonder of life, and the awesomeness of God's creation just outside the curtained window of our anxiety.

This vision, this joy, this SON shine is already ours;
Ours to behold and ours to shine with. The true gift we have been given is the opportunity to immerse ourselves as Christ body the Church in God's grace, hope and abundance.

We can be like a tea bag, a bunch of dried, torn and crushed leaves stuffed into a bag, but when we are immersed, when we are steeped, soaked in the waters of God's love the flavor and the warmth of God's love breathed into us comes out.

May each and all of us Steep our lives in God's grace, through prayer, and worship and study and service and overflowing with God's grace.

Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah when the people of Zion spoke and he shared the word of the Lord.

"But Zion said, 'the Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.' and the Lord replied, 'Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.'"

Steep your life in God, that God might flavor the world around you. Amen.