

Unison

Morning Has Broken

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C Am Dm G F C

1. Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing;
 2. Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en,
 3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing

Am Em/G F Em Dm G

black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird.
 like the first dew - fall on the first grass.
 born of the one light E - den saw play!

C F C Am Dm/F

Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
 Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
 Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - ery morn - ing,

D7/F# C/G F G7 C

Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
 sprung in com - plete - ness where his feet pass.
 God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon, 1931 (Lam. 3:22-23)
 MUSIC: Trad. Gaelic melody; harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1988

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We Would Be Building

Purd E. Deitz, 1897-

FINLANDIA 10.10.10.10.10.

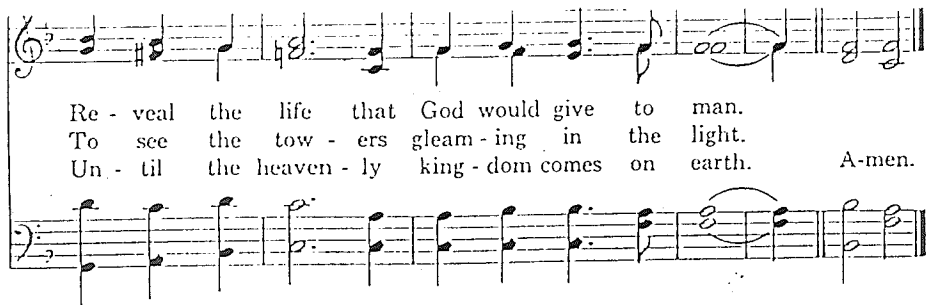
Jean Sibelius, 1865-1957

1 We would be build - ing; tem - ples still un - done O'er crum - bling
 2 Teach us, to build; up - on the sol - id rock We set the
 3 O keep us build - ing, Mas - ter; may our hands Ne'er fal - ter

walls their cross - es scarce - ly lift, Wait - ing till love can
 dream that hard - ens in - to deed, Ribbed with the steel that
 when the dream is in our hearts, When to our ears there

raise the bro - ken stone, And hearts cre - a - tive bridge the hu - man rift.
 time and change doth mock, The un - fail - ing pur - pose of our no - blest creed.
 come di - vine com - mands And all the pride of sin - ful will de - parts.

We would be build - ing; Mas - ter, let thy plan
 Teach us to build; O Mas - ter, lend us sight
 We build with thee, O grant en - dur - ing worth



A lower setting may be found at No. 77

Wonalancet Chapel

Order of Service for August 8, 1999

Call to Worship

Hymn: "Morning Has Broken" (in program)

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer (trespass)

Unison Reading: Psalm 34: 1-8 page 627 in prayer book

Readings: Deuteronomy 8: 1-10
Mathew 5: 21-24
Mathew 9: 10-13
Ephesians 4: 25-29

Offering

Anthem: "Oh Perfect Love" Peggy Johnson

Announcements

Hymn: "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" page 357

Thoughts: "You Are More" Helen Steele

Closing Hymn: "We Would Be Building"

Sermon:

We are all invited to the table. The wondrous welcome of Jesus to everyone who comes and goes - especially those who would never feel invited. The round table, fellowship, where each person's contribution (we remember Paul and the varieties of gifts) is equally valued. In the church, we welcome everyone, everyone is equal. This is the radical inclusion of God. This is the Christian view of how we are supposed to live

The thermodynamic view of living and life goes something like this. "Can't win. Gotta play." Sounds harsh, doesn't it? The second law of thermodynamics says that entropy wins, or, disorder reigns unless lots of energy is infused into the system, in this case our lives.

Today I want to look at the relationship between Christian and thermodynamic views. Might seem a bit much to bite off. However, last time I related matter/antimatter to good and evil and Mother Theresa. So it should be no problem to marry humility and thermodynamics in the next 12 minutes.

I am a teacher/chemist/parent/sheep farmer. I have to speak from those places for these are what I know. So it is from there that I will use words, however cautiously,

As a teacher and a parent, I worried deeply at the Columbine shootings. As a member of our culture, I was shocked. This is what I came to.

There is a deadly message out there, and I have lost all patience with it. What message? The myriad of ways we have found to say. "You are less." Less than I am. Less than you could be. Less than perfect.

Every time this message is delivered, the recipient will do everything in his power to show that he is more. When we/society are lucky, when our energy fights off the chaos the ugly message could produce the overachiever who starts a school, confronts an HMO, keeps a highway from being built, teaches, starts an outdoor ministry for the homeless, heals, comforts. At the other end of the spectrum, when thermodynamics and chaos step in, when we aren't so lucky, the message "you are less" (loser, dork, dweeb,) may make a teenager pick up a gun and shoot his classmates.

You may disagree. You may see teenagers as agents of that tuneless beat that thuds from young cars, lazy and unappreciative. This is not my view. Every time I see the message delivered, a part of me shrinks.

We all see it delivered. A lot, Everyday.

Children say, "I don't want to play with you." We forgive them this and try to educate because they are young. Teenagers pretend you aren't there and say absolutely the worst things to each other. We have no idea how to fix teenagers. Adults get complicated and use money, the veiled message and doubletalk, to separate themselves from others.

In the professional world "Please hold." Is not encouraging. "I'll be right with you." Can be put-offish. Even, "can I help you" can mean "What are you doing here - go away."

Our world is a verbal minefield. This lends credence to Peggy's admonition to be cautious with words.

Just for a real treat, lets fantasize making a call to your HMO. You've just paid full bore for a medication you thought was covered.

First the menu. Particularly enthralling when you happen to be using a rotary phone. After realizing that you have already lost track of the options, you push "3". Voice. "Your call is very important to us." "All our member service representatives are currently assisting other customers. "I see one person drinking coffee and reading. " Please stay on the line and we will answer your call in the order it is received." We are already 2-3 minutes into this event. Then the real treat, a few minutes of really annoying music, an unrecognizable "Canon In D" or maybe Tom Jones, "Its Not Unusual.." At this point somewhat distracted (rage) from the fact you are making this call because you actually have a real concern. Then you get a message that this call may be recorded in order to assure quality service. What service? Then finally you get a real person who says, "May I have your identification number." Sure thing. Then - "Hello, this is Jessica. How may I help you?" You've waited 5 minutes. You are not going to be at your best asking why your current medication has been taken off the registry of approved maintenance drugs. You give perhaps a minute of explanation at which point Jessica says, "My computer screen is down right now, may I call you back?" Your limits are pushed but with the smidgen of self-control you have left, you say, "OK. Your name is Jessica who?" ...Pause. "Oh, the computer is back on. What did you say your problem was?"

At this point we hardly feel a part of the system. We feel a victim of it. We could almost forget that we paid for this insurance. We certainly do not feel included, respected, valued. How you do feel is probably best not described. It does occur to me that guns don't seem so unthinkable.

Social services, they are there to help those who need it. Those folks with the perseverance, energy, education and tools to get the help, are not the ones who need it.

Teenagers are surrounded by a vast sea of you are less messages -

"You don't make the team,

"We aren't talking to you right now,"

"You can't come"

No invitation issued to the concert Friday night.

Having spent my productive years working with teenagers, it is hard to miss the result. An explosion of inappropriate nervous giggles, acting out, aggression - and the sheen of pain clear on their faces.

I am the product, somewhat self-imposed but in any case, lots of us do that, of you are not quite good enough yet. And it worked, I worked very hard to get good enough, and of course, in my own head, never got there. And I am sure I will probably continue to fight the message until I drop off the edge..

Not good enough for whom? That's an important question. I don't care about my HMO. I sort of enjoy basking them. I am paid to put up with imponderables in my work. Our students, our children, our families, our friends, our communities - their reaction counts to us. When I think about how nice all those folks are to me and how hard I still work to get good enough, I worry a lot about those with less support.

But it goes without saying that we cringe at our shortcomings before God..... and the challenges of simplicity, grace, humility, love for our neighbor.....overcome the least and most challenged of us. This is not the message I fear. Because these challenges come with the implicit promise of forgiveness. We can learn to accept our stature with God.

We, on the other hand human to human are prone to judge, evaluate and we have no right. It simply is not our job.

Social services do not work with inspired kindness and humility. They have a SOP. Put a severe stress on a human, and social services take months to respond. We find out fast who is truly kind.

In the past two years, I have been privileged to see, yet again, true kindness and generosity. The kind you see when you are lost and have no idea what to do..... I have seen the village take care of the child.

But I didn't find the help in the agencies, any of the bureaucracies, those societal behemoths, ... festooned in layers, mounted to address social needs. There I found true insanity.

I found simplicity, humility, and generosity in many individuals, at those moments when they gave time to let the best shine through.

When they put aside all their learning and hard won expertise, as Peggy eloquently stated, to make room for the muse. Or if you wish, to listen to their hearts.

Society (I use the high school as the microcosm) delivers the message "you are less" in regular doses.. We are trained to deliver it.

I once thought I would climb Peter's ladder and ADVANCE to that ranks of administrator. I took a course at BU. What I learned how to get the most out of those working with me by, frankly, manipulation.

The artful use of phrases like: "I have some good news and some bad news." (The good pales next to the bad) Or, "I have an opportunity to share with you." (Opportunity is a funny word for a bit of extra work.) "We have to work as a team here." (You aren't)

Although administrators have become infinitely more enlightened, and I have had some terrific ones, I decided then and there, bosses, that only the trenches were for me.

I know I am not capable of the thinly veiled, we are all part of a team, put-down. Downsizing. What is that? A friend once told me that when her superior mentioned downsizing, she first thought he meant she should loose weight.

How **can** we find quality in others and ourselves with honesty and truth, without the unattainable carrot? Without fear, confusion, uncertainty, intimidation.

Lots of ways actually. Put teenagers in a place where they are safe and comfortable with real and relevant information, and guess what. The bottom does not fall out. Put children in classrooms where everyone is heard, and they speak - volumes. Put a child in a safe environment, acknowledge him and challenge him and watch out. I have a lifetime of data to support this. Chaos, the thermodynamic product, does not reign when the energy you put in is supportive rather than..... Exclusive.

But treat someone like you know you are smarter than he is, like if he just listened the first time he would know what to do, like it is obvious how to do it - and the child or the adult will retreat, and all that wonderful energy will turn inward and bitter; implodes; damage can be done.

People love to work at meaningful tasks. Most like company. Most like encouragement. And many don't get a lot of either.

We isolate. We separate. We rate. We divide, dilute, disempower, and dismember with -simply - a gaze averted. A whispered comment. A communication not acknowledged. We are masters at this.

So, I'd like to leave you with this today. With humility I want to say - You are not less; you are more. Lots more. Perhaps more than we ever imagined. Denny, the house is clean. And your children are beautiful. Henry, you are perfect. Eliot, you are a delight. Susan, your garden is glorious. At weed here or there is fine. Let's not confuse weeding with nurturing. A weed by any other name "trails judgements. Useless, without value, unwanted." Perhaps we don't want mustard in our garden, but that does not mean it isn't beautiful.

But we object - isn't it true? Entropy? Chaos will reign? The thermodynamic view of the universe. Can't win. Gotta play. No - so much more is possible. We CAN win and we do. It depends, of course on how you define the "game."

We are NOT capable of the radical inclusiveness of God. Only God has the capacity for that. We have to care for what we see. We can put our energy into that which nurtures and avoid that which tears down, however well meaning it may be.

Of course we need to set limits. This does not mean exclusion. The mustard can have a lovely place to grow. As long as we take our interpersonal challenges, set meaningful and appropriate limits. As long as we can accept, forgive, and most importantly, move on. As long as we put as much energy into our relationships as we put into our lists of things to do.....

It takes time, introspective time, to do this. It takes a bit of doing nothing as elaborated by Phil Simmons. When did we last actually sit down and let the light change around us before we charged off to the next hurdle? Because it is in those moments that we gain the clarity to do with your next moment something wonderful. We don't get that clarity multitasking. God, what a horrible concept. It means lets be so busy and so clenched for the next task that we don't notice.

What we don't notice is the pain.

You all understand that the "doing nothings" I am talking about is not lethargy. I am not suggesting lethargy. Most of you aren't capable. I am not suggesting retreating to the TV armed with ice cream and a remote. That is hiding. Insulating. What I am suggesting is not easy; it takes the purest and the best of our energy and effort. The unseen, unknown, unheard is out there, waiting for us to take the time to find it. And understand that there may not be words for it.

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year. Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. And he replied. Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be for you better than a light and safer than a known way."

Did any of you see the film "Ever After, " with Drew Barrymore playing Cinderella. It ends, "and they lived happily ever after. But most importantly, they lived."

A rewarding life is a life of service - mindfully rendered. Many serve their demons. Many of those demons came from that message. The message that you don't cut it. Don't listen to that message and, more importantly, let's not give it.

I suspect I seem strident and angry. I guess I am. In my venue, I see too many fine folks diminished. Young and old. The human is a wonderful thing and frankly, stack up all the shortcomings together and there isn't much to distinguish one of us from the other. It is important to not confuse weeding with nurturing.

From Janet Fitch. "You don't have to press your face against every cloud. You don't have to be the protagonist of every random event."

We are all a mess. Or if you wish, we are all beautiful. It is enough, it is more not less, that we are.

Amen

Closing Hymn - Finlandia - 382

Closing prayer