

MOVING SPIRIT

July, 1998

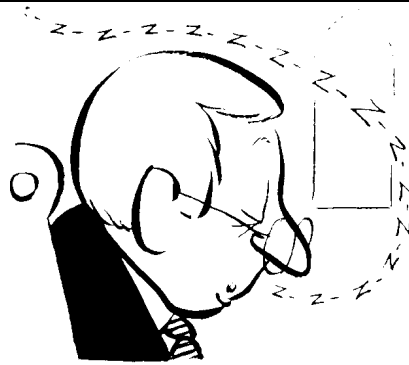
Eskaton Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

God gave us the gift of sleep to renew body and mind for our day's activities. It is a healthy rhythm in our lives: rest and activity, rest and activity. All of us need sleep, but more important than how well we sleep is how well we awaken.

The facing cartoon uses a sight that is not too uncommon from the pulpit. To be honest, I myself nod off frequently when listening to sermons. After the message, I jokingly tell the preacher I was giving him silent "Amens," nodding my assent to his words. But it's not how well we napped or how well we listened. As the caption of the cartoon says, it's "what takes place after the preacher ends the sermon." It's how well we awaken.

Jessamyn West said, "*A religious awakening that does not awaken the sleeper to love has roused him in vain.*" I know that in God's perspective (Who gives us rest *even* during Sunday morning services), we are not awake spiritually until love has become the foundation of our thoughts and daily lives. All spiritual awakenings, personal or corporate, must have love in their center. After we enjoy the grace and refreshment of rest, the God of love calls us to the wide-awake activity of love and



After the Sermon

A "religious awakening" is what takes place after the preacher ends the sermon.

useful service to others.

I pray that all who attend EVCC will be awake spiritually. No matter what our eyes do during sermons, what is most important to me and to the Lord we serve is the life we live in between the sermons.

--Pastor David

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Parish Proclamations

EVCC's Service Time Unchanged

A congregational vote was taken on Sunday, June 21st, whether to change EVCC's service time to 10:00 AM, shorten the present service, or keep the time from 10:30 to 11:30. The results were as follows:

05 - earlier service

10 - shorten service

21 - no change

So, we will still be meeting regularly at the same time.

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Next Church Committee Meeting

Three church committee meetings are held each year, to which all who attend EVCC are invited. The next will be Tuesday, September the 1st. Mark your calendars early.

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People's Pulpit

Better the storm with Christ than smooth waters without Him! The last three (going on four) years have been stormy indeed! But if I remember to focus on Jesus and ask, "What would You do?"--there are blue skies and yes, smooth waters, too. If we are quiet and listen for His words (sometimes just a whisper) and read His words, then you can feel the Spirit within and yes, sometimes can even feel the heat: "flying closer to the Flame" (borrowing the words of Chuck Swindoll). Because I love the Lord and, most definitely, He loves me, even though there are many, many stormy days, I can really see the blue sky and smooth waters ahead. Blessings can come from turmoil, but if we listen to that still small voice (whispering again) we can gain strength and, most of all, Hope. Praise Him--Thank Him, and Peace will come. Most of all, Pray.

--anonymous from someone at Eskaton

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Pithy Pieces

A Modern Parable

A troubled young man went for counseling. When the psychologist found him too poor to pay his fee, he quickly dismissed him, but gave him a card which read:

Five Essentials to Happiness

1. Health
2. Freedom
3. Financial security
4. Congenial work
5. Reciprocated love

Knowing how ill he always was, he had a check-up. "No wonder you're sick all the time!" said the doctor. "You have a rare immune-system disease." "How can I get well?" asked the fellow. "You can't," was the reply. "It's incurable and only gets worse with time." The young man looked down at his card, crossing off line #1.

Despite his poor health, the military drafted him. When he protested, they reassured him that he would be given light-duty jobs. "But I don't want to wear a uniform. Can't I serve my country some other way?" "Not today, private!" was the reply. "You belong to Uncle Sam now!" The young man took out his card, crossing out line #2.

While still in the service, he got a court summons. He was being sued for child-support by an old girlfriend. Although it was physically impossible for the child to be his, the court found him guilty and garnished his wages. Looking for his card, he finally found it

and crossed through line #3.

As his health worsened, he was assigned less and less interesting work to do. One morning, kneeling to scrub a toilet in the latrine, he remembered the card. In the barracks that night, he drew a line through line #4.

When he finally received a medical discharge, the military arranged for his immediate admission into a Veteran's hospital because his terminal illness was so debilitating. Bedridden and bored, he began reading the Gideon Bible in the drawer of his night stand. He used the card the psychologist gave him as a bookmark.

One day, when feeling extremely weak, he barely got the Bible open. He was in 1 John, and his eyes fell on these words in the fourth chapter:

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.... We love Him because He first loved us.

With his last bit of strength he took a pen and circled the last line on the card, "reciprocated love," and with that the young man left this world in peace.

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Praise's Portion

For all things beautiful, and good, and true;

For things that seemed not good yet turned out good;

For all the sweet compulsions of Thy will That chased, and tried, and wrought us to Thy shape;

For things unnumbered that we take of right,
And value first when first they are withheld;
For light and air; sweet sense of sound and smell;
For ears to hear the heavenly harmonies;
For eyes to see the unseen in the seen;
For vision of The Worker in the work;
For hearts that apprehend Thee everyone;
We thank Thee, Lord!

-- John Oxenham

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Prayer's Priorities

There Is Always Time

In this extremely busy world and age that we live in, it is very easy to make all sorts of excuses for not taking time every day to pray and reflect upon the blessings we have witnessed. Time is a strange thing and surely we are all busy, but we must look at our busyness as a blessing and a reality in time.

For me, the easiest time of reflection is right before I lay my head to rest for the evening. And so it can be for you. Simply take a few moments before you drift off to sleep to reflect upon the day that has just been. See all the things you did from the time you arose to the very moment you laid your head to rest for the night. Then, say a quick prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings you experienced. Every day is filled with countless blessings. See them and be thankful.

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I suggest that every time you pray, you add this phrase, "Lord, take from my

thoughts all ill will, grudges, hates and jealousies." Then practice casting these things from your thoughts.

--Norman Vincent Peale

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Morning Prayer

I have come to Thee to take Thy touch before I begin my day. Let Thine eyes rest upon my eyes for a while. Let me take to my work with assurance of Thy friendship. Fill my mind to last through the desert of noise. Let Thy blessed sunshine fill the peaks of my thoughts. And give me strength for those who need me. Amen.

--Mother Teresa

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Give us a pure heart
That we may see Thee,
A humble heart
That we may hear Thee,
A heart of love
That we may serve Thee,
A heart of faith
That we may live Thee.

--Dag Hammarskjöld

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Thinking of You

This morning as I rose from bed and
saw the sun above
I softly said "Good Morning, God, bless
everyone I love."

And right away I thought of you and
said a loving prayer
That He would bless you specially and
keep you free from care.

I thought of all the happiness your day
could hold in store;

And wished it all for you, because no

one deserves it more.

I felt so warm and good inside, my
heart was all aglow
I know God heard my prayer for you,
he hears them all you know.

--The Omaha Home for Boys

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Poetry's Place

It is finished! What a Gospel!
Nothing has been left to do
but to take with grateful gladness
what the Savior did for you.

It is finished! Hallelujah!

Christ the work has fully done.

All who will may have their pardon
through the blood of God's dear Son.

--author unknown

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There are daring, unmarked paths
On which each generation strides
To search for truth, toward unknown stars
Or mountains never climbed before.

Some travel strongly, purpose filled;
And others timidly--with hope.
And some leap flying to some
Distant star, or crest an unknown peak.

However you walk, or fly, or climb,
Know this: that some who walked or flew
Or climbed before, believed with you
In stars and mountains only dreamed.

--author unknown

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Pearls of Prudence

If there is a hereafter,
There is a before now.

-- Robert Frost

A teacher affects eternity; he can never
tell where his influence stops.

--Henry Adams, historian

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He who throws mud gets dirty hands.

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What we steadily, consciously,
habitually think we are, that we tend to
become. --John Cowper Powers

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Pleasurable Pastime

A little girl had misbehaved, and as a
punishment, at supper time, her parents
sat her down at a small table by herself in
the corner of the dining room. The rest
of the family paid no notice to her, until
suddenly they heard her praying over her
meal with these words: "I thank You,
Dear Lord, for preparing a table before
me in the presence of my enemies!"

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Precious Principles

The most extraordinary thing about an
oyster is this: irritations get into this
shell. He does not like them. But when
he cannot get rid of them, he uses the
irritations to do the loveliest thing an
oyster ever has a chance to do. If there
are irritations in our lives today, there is
only one prescription: make a pearl!

--Harry Emerson Fosdick

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The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth.
I am closer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

--author unknown

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Let us live in such a way

That when we die

Our love will survive

And continue to grow.

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Watch your *thoughts*, they become your
words. Watch your *words*, they become
your *actions*. Watch your *actions*, they
become your *habits*. Watch your *habits*,
they become your *character*. Watch your
character, it becomes your *life*.

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Hope is an essential part of the human
spirit. It is a universal and free tool,
available to everyone regardless of
religion or economic circumstance. We
can be very tough on ourselves. Unusual
is the person who focuses on positive
qualities all the time and, if they do,
they're probably wildly successful.

--Bethann Bennett

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Think globally; act locally.

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Past Pathways

"Having a Humble Opinion of Self"

(from *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à
Kempis, early 1400s)

Every man naturally desires
knowledge; but what good is knowledge
without fear of God? Indeed a humble
rustic who serves God is better than a
proud intellectual who neglects his soul
to study the course of the stars. He who
knows himself well becomes mean in his
own eyes and is not happy when praised
by men. If I knew all things in the world

and had not charity, what would it profit me before God Who will judge me by my deeds? Shun too great a desire for knowledge, for in it there is much fretting and delusion. Intellectuals like to appear learned and to be called wise. Yet there are many things the knowledge of which does little or no good to the soul, and he who concerns himself about other things than those which lead to salvation is very unwise. Many words do not satisfy the soul; but a good life eases the mind and a clean conscience inspires great trust in God. The more you know and the better you understand, the more severely will you be judged, unless your life is also the more holy. Do not be proud, therefore, because of your learning or skill. Rather, fear because of the talent given you. If you think you know many things and understand them well enough, realize at the same time that there is much you do not know. Hence, do not affect wisdom, but admit your ignorance. Why prefer yourself to anyone else when many are more learned, more cultured than you? If you wish to learn and appreciate

something worth while, then love to be unknown and considered as nothing. Truly to know and despise self is the best and most perfect counsel. To think of oneself as nothing, and always to think well and highly of others is the best and most perfect wisdom. Wherefore, if you see another sin openly or commit a serious crime, do not consider yourself better, for you do not know how long you can remain in good estate. All men are frail, but you must admit that none is more frail than yourself.

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(Note: As space permits, "*Past Pathways*" will be a continuing part of the *Moving Spirit*, bringing portions from church history and past spiritual writers to our present. We must stay in touch with our past heritage, while serving our present and looking to our future. Neglecting the wisdom of our forefathers in the faith enfeebles God's people in much the same way that neglecting the wisdom of our country's past leaders impoverishes modern American culture. -- Pastor David)