

Our second Scripture is from the gospel of John. This passage is part of what is called the farewell discourse where Jesus is describing events connected to the end of his life on earth. He is preparing his disciples for a time when God will no longer be incarnated in a particular person in their presence. Jesus is trying to prepare them for what comes next. Jesus needs for them to realize that there is something beyond his crucifixion.

Read John 14:1-14

Frederick Buechner tells about a dream that he once had:

“Several years ago I had a dream that I was staying in a hotel somewhere and that the room that I was given was a room that I loved. I no longer have any clear picture of what the room looked like, and even in the dream itself I think it wasn’t so much the way the room looked that pleased me as it was the way it made me feel. It was a room where I felt happy and at peace, where everything seemed the way it should be and everything about myself seemed the way it should be too. Then, as the dream went on, I wandered off to other places and did other things and finally, after many adventures, ended back at the same hotel again. Only this time I was given a different room which I didn’t feel comfortable in at all. It seemed dark and cramped, and I felt dark and cramped in it. So I made my way down to the man at the desk and told him my problem. On my earlier visit, I said, I’d had this marvelous room which was just right for me in every way and which I’d very much like if possible to have again. The trouble, I explained, was that I hadn’t kept track of where the room was and didn’t know how to find it or how to ask for it. The clerk was very understanding. He said that he knew exactly the room I meant and that I could have it again anytime I wanted it. All I had to do, he said, was ask for it by its name. So then, of course, I asked him what the name of the room was. He would be happy to tell me, he said and then he told me. The name of the room, he said, was Remember. Remember, he said. The name of the room I wanted was Remember. That was what woke me. It shocked me awake, and the shock of it, the dazzling unexpectedness of it, is vivid to me still. I knew it was a good dream, and I felt that in some unfathomable way it was also a true dream. The fact that I did not understand its truth did not keep from being in some sense also a blessed dream, a healing dream, because you do not need to understand healing to be healed or know anything about blessing to be blessed. The sense of peace that filled me in that room.

The knowledge that I could return to it whenever I wanted to or needed to – that was where the healing and blessing came from. And the name of the room – that was where the mystery came from; that was at the heart of the healing though I did not fully understand why. The name of the room was Remember. Why remember? What was there about remembering that brought a peace so deep, a sense of well-being so complete and intense that it jolted me awake in my bed? It was a dream that seemed true not only for me but true for everybody. What we are to remember – all of us? To what end and purpose are we to remember?” *-A Room Called Remember*

Memories can be sources of great comfort for many of us. On this Mother’s Day many of us have warm memories of time spent with women who cared for us and comforted us. A warm hug when we returned home from school or a word of support during a difficult time. Words of wisdom when you had questions.

For others of us, memories bring us pain and discomfort. Maybe for some of us Mother’s Day brings us anguish as we think of memories of a mother who seemed distant when we needed a hug. For others of us on Mother’s Day we feel a sense of emptiness because memories are something that we can no longer share with our mothers because they are no longer with us on earth or mothers who feel the pain from children who departed the earth before their parents.

But in our text today Jesus invites us into a relationship of memory. When we read today’s passage many of us may read these words as Jesus talking about a place. I have come to prepare a place for you. In my Father’s House are many rooms or dwelling places.

But really this is a text about relationship. Jesus is speaking to followers who are sensing that the road ahead is difficult and they fear being left alone. Jesus reassures them that the road ahead will not be one where they are alone. They are fearful that they will be traveling a road with no direction.

But Jesus reassures them that the future is in God's hand. That the future is not something to be feared. That by knowing Christ they know the companion who will travel with them into the future.

Memories can actually be sources of healing as we move into the future. Maybe we are invited today to conjure up that one memory when we found reassurance while we were fearful. Maybe we are invited today to allow ourselves to go to that feeling of warmth and comfort that we experienced during a rather vulnerable time in our life.

Those memories that we cherish and hold dear may in fact be the memory which helps to remind us of God's presence in the future. That memory may help us with whatever healing we need today.

We are called to return to a room called Remember. And as we return to that room we are to hear the words of Jesus to remind us that God is giving us guidance into the future. That in the future God has already prepared a place for us as we journey into the future.

We do not travel those roads alone but we travel with a companion. A companion in the risen Christ who knows the way and invites us to travel those roads with him.

Later in the service we will be invited to share in Holy Communion. Holy Communion is a meal of remembrance but also a meal to prepare us for the future. We remember the sacrifice that God has made on our behalf but it's a sacrifice that prepares us for the future.

We are reminded that we do not travel alone into the future. We remember and we hear words of comfort. We have a companion. A companion in Jesus. A companion who is the way, the truth, and the life. With him we will be just fine. AMEN.

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-Given: May 14, 2017 in Allison Creek Presbyterian (York, SC)