

KMarie Tejada:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

KMarie Tejada:

Welcome to morning prayers. If you please stand as you're able and join me in a responsive reading, which this morning is Psalm 139, and is found in your [inaudible 00:00:14] book. It is the black book, on page 70.

KMarie Tejada:

Oh Lord, you have searched me and know me.

Congregation:

You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from far away.

KMarie Tejada:

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Congregation:

Even before a word is on my tongue Lord, You know it completely.

KMarie Tejada:

You hem me in behind and before, and lay Your hand upon me.

Congregation:

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is so high, I cannot attain it.

KMarie Tejada:

Where can I go from Your spirit or where can I flee from Your presence?

Congregation:

If I ascend to the heaven, You are there. If I lay in my bed in [inaudible 00:01:19], You are there.

KMarie Tejada:

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea.

Congregation:

Even there Your hand shall lead me and Your right hand shall hold me fast.

KMarie Tejada:

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me and the light around me become night."

Congregation:

Even the darkness is not dark to You. The night is as bright as day, for darkness is as light as You.

KMarie Tejeda:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(singing)

Garth McCavana:

I was born and bred in Ireland, so I'd like to begin with what's sometimes referred to as an Irish blessing. I'll read it first in Irish, and then after my remarks, I'll read the English translation. (Prayer in Irish)

Garth McCavana:

It's a running joke in our house that I'm addicted to cycling. Now, it might be the 5,300 miles I rode last year or the 350 hours that those rides took, but I think I probably concur with that sentiment. Given that I spend so much time on a bicycle, I thought I would take a few moments today to reflect on some of the life lessons that I've learned from cycling, which I have applied here at Harvard and in my life in general.

Garth McCavana:

Cycling is one of those sports that can be enjoyed both in a group or alone. Each has its own merits. However, I think it's safe to say that these days, we don't spend enough time alone with our thoughts. We use so much of our time to stare at screens demanding ever more of our attention. That it's a soul to do something where it's just you, your body, and your thoughts, propelling you alone. I commuted by bike to Harvard for 15 years, and I have to say that I solved some of my most intractable problems and wrote numerous speeches in my head while riding along the Minuteman Bikeway headed to work. However, like most things in life, cycling is usually better when done with other people.

Garth McCavana:

For those who don't know about the concept of a pace line, it's where you ride along in a group, in a single file, with each person taking turns at the front, breaking the wind for those behind you. It takes 30% less effort to ride behind someone in a pace line, so you can go farther and faster. A smooth pace line is a beautiful sight to behold, and is a perfect metaphor for working collaboratively with friends and colleagues. Naturally, some riders are stronger, so they take on more of the work, spending longer at the front. But everyone gets to take a turn and contributes to the collective effort.

Garth McCavana:

While I'm cycling, I notice that people become friendlier. You wave and nod to other cyclists. You give pedestrians a warning that you're passing, and you always ask someone struggling by the roadside with a mechanical problem if you can help. Similarly, while there's usually a gentle competitive spirit to see who gets to the top of the hill first, no one ever gets left behind. If someone is lagging, you drop back and help pull them up to the group and keep an eye out for them as you approach the next hill. If someone is running short on food or drink, you share some of yours with them so they make it back home without facing the dreaded bonk, when your legs and your head give up for lack of fuel.

Garth McCavana:

A nurse in an emergency room I was a patient in after a bike accident, yes, there are downsides to cycling, once told me that she loved having cyclists as patients, as they knew how to suffer pain well. Being a cyclist means learning to persist in the face of adversity, believing in your ability to make it to the top of that two mile climb, despite the 10% gradient. It also means learning to work hard for your rewards in life, for once you have slugged your way to the top of that two mile climb, you'll have a dizzying two mile descent on the other side.

Garth McCavana:

As a sport, cycling attracts people from all walks of life, but no one cares if you're a lawyer, a plumber, a nurse, or a dean. What's important, is that you can ride a nice straight line, look out for others and pull back any stragglers. Your worth as a person is measured by how much of a good contributing member of the group you are, not what you do when off the bike. I've used many of these life lessons learned from cycling in how I pursued my professional life at Harvard, and now that I'm close to ending my more than 32 year career here, I look forward to continuing to practice them in the next phase in life, both metaphorically and literally when I next hit the road with my cycling group, some of whom who are here today.

Garth McCavana:

Let me now read the translation of the Irish blessing that I read at the start, and I hope that you will see its particular relevance for the cycling community. May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

KMarie Tejada:

Please join me in saying the Lord's Prayer. It is found on the reverse of your order of worship.

Congregation:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

KMarie Tejada:

Please stand as you are able and join together in singing the hymn, Forty Days and Forty Nights. It is found on your Harvard Hymnal. It is Hymn 143.

Congregation:

(singing)

KMarie Tejada:

And now, let us go in peace, trusting the Lord in the journey of life and feeling joyful always. Amen.

Speaker 2:

Amen.

