

Laurie Sedgwick:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Morning.

Laurie Sedgwick:

And welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for our responsive reading from the Black Appleton Psalter Book. This morning, we'll be reading Psalm 121, found on page 61.

Laurie Sedgwick:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

Congregation:

My help cometh from the Lord, which made Heaven and Earth.

Laurie Sedgwick:

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee, will not slumber.

Congregation:

Behold, He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber or sleep.

Laurie Sedgwick:

The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

Congregation:

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

Laurie Sedgwick:

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul.

Congregation:

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.

Choir:

(singing)

Rafael Trevino:

Morning, everyone.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Rafael Trevino:

My text comes from C.S. Lewis. In friendship, we think we have chosen our peers, in reality, a few years difference in the dates of our births, a few more miles between certain houses, the choice of one university instead of another. The accident of a topic being raised or not raised at a first meeting. Any of these chances might have kept us apart but for a Christian, there are, strictly speaking, no chances.

A secret master of ceremonies has been at work. Christ, who said to the disciples, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," can truly say to every group of friends, "You have not chosen one another, but I have chosen you for one another." The friendship is not a reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to us, the beauties of others.

Four years ago. I would've been standing in front of you all simply as a kid from Texas, with a loving mother who did everything that she could to be a model for myself and my three younger siblings, because this is all that I felt identified me. As a Mexican-American, not fluent in Spanish, I struggled with my Latinx identity. My relationship with God was not what it used to be. I was unsure of my calling in life and most of all, I was unsure how I would determine I ever found it.

But now I stand before you a young man, someone who in a month's time will be an alumnus of Harvard College and Kirkland House, the best house in the world. And someone who is sure than ever about the type of person that I am. And last of all, someone who feels that the biggest is key to finding my calling is the experience of happiness.

I want to reflect on some of the things that I've learned in my time here that have taught me about happiness and while the journey to it is so unique to each person, I hope that each of you can take something meaningful away from what I've discovered on mine thus far.

I'm actually currently enrolled in a class on happiness, which inspired this reflection. Traditional happiness philosophies seem to have a formula to them. Aristotle believed that we need to perfect certain virtues and study in certain education to be happy. The Stoics believe that you should only concern yourself with things that you are fully in control of, in order to control your own happiness. The Epicureans associated maximizing pleasure with maximizing happiness. But as we all know, and as I especially know after these last four years, happiness is not a straight path of the formula. There's no map to travel down its road. We must take chances in hopes of finding the road and remaining on it.

The answers do not exist purely in books and academic papers, although we can draw insights from it. The following three points I'll make, took my entire college experience to realize and appreciate how much they impacted, not only my own happiness, but those of the people around me.

The first was making meaningful connections. While initial college life can be quickly absorbed by trying to make professional connections, it's the personal ones that truly drive me and drive the rest of us. Part of me used to think that I could form these relationships simply by being liked by everyone. But it took time for me to understand that a meaningful relationship is one in which you can stand on the shoulders of the person you have one with and not constantly seek their approval. Many of us thrive from having

these relationships with friends and family and God. And these are important relationships that we should nurture and pour our love into, always.

The second is having a purpose. You should always find meaning and personal growth in the work you do. Whether you're an academic, a banker, a businessman, a mother, a father, an engineer, if you can't discuss ever something immaterial about the work you do, that propels you to continue engaging in it, then you'll never find yourself fulfilled. This is something that can mold and change over time until you manifest God's true calling for you. I am leaving here with a plan for my future, but I am always prepared for those plans to be altered and always keeping in mind that the one constant in this world is change, aids me in finding my purpose in life.

The third and last is being thankful. I began the practice of looking around me at random moments to consider two things that I am thankful for and this has completely changed my perception of things that I take for granted. The fact that I have access to a water fountain and food daily, the fact that I can study and worship without fear of persecution, and as my text from C.S. Lewis mentions, the fact that I am in a position, even at this moment, that is a product of small choices and decisions and accidents that led me here.

I'm extremely grateful at the choices that God has guided me to make and the friends and family and community that he's supplied me with, not just these past four years, but for my entire life, because they've made me the man that I am today.

I'll finish with this. I truly understand why seniors are specifically tasked with giving these talks because there's a tremendous amount of self-reflection that occurs at this point in our lives, when they're about to change forever. But I believe that I could have been even more aware of these factors if I had simply practiced self-reflection in the past.

So as you continue about your day, what I hope you take away is not that these three points are the key to happiness for you. Even if they are, which I suspect more than one will be part of your own journey, they'll have different levels of importance to each person. But what I do hope you leave here knowing is that taking time for small reflections, for example, looking around you and thinking about the incredible situations and consequences of events that brought you to the people around you, may be the key to unlocking what God has in store for you, and may be the key to unlocking what makes you happy. Thank you.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Please stand as you are able and let us pray. By the power of your Holy Spirit, open our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to your love throughout this day, that we may act wisely for the good of our church and community. In your name we pray. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

And now let us recite together the prayer that Jesus taught us saying,

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in Heaven. Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and 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, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Let us sing the hymn, Let Us, With A Gladsome Mind, number eight, found in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir:

(Singing).

Laurie Sedgwick:

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness, all that exists. Pour out upon us, the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature, as we journey toward your infinite light.

Laurie Sedgwick:

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.