

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Welcome to our daily worship of Morning Prayers here in Appleton Chapel. We're so grateful that our speaker this morning is the Reverend Monica Sanford, Assistant Dean for Multireligious Ministry here at Harvard Divinity School. Thank you for being with us this morning. All who are able, please rise, in body and spirit, for our responsive reading, found in your Black Psalter, Psalm 40. "I waited patiently for you, O God. You stooped to me and heard my cry. You lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay. You set my feet upon a high cliff and made my footing sure."

Congregation:

"You lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay. You set my feet upon a high cliff and made my footing sure."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

"You put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in you."

Congregation:

"Many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in you."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

"In sacrifice and offering you take no pleasure. You have given me ears to hear you. Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, and so I said, 'Behold, I come.'"

Congregation:

"Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, and so I said, 'Behold, I come.'"

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

"In the roll of the book it is written concerning me: 'I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep in my heart.' I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I did not restrain my lips, and that, O God, you know."

Congregation:

"I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I did not restrain my lips, and that, O God, you know."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

"Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance. I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation. You are the

Holy One; do not withhold your compassion from me. Let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever."

Congregation:

"You are the Holy One; do not withhold your compassion from me. Let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

You may be seated.

MUSIC:

As I went down in the river to pray.
Studying about that good old way.
And who shall wear the starry crown.
Good Lord, show me the way.
Oh sisters, let's go down.
Let's go down, come on down.
Oh sisters, let's go down.
Down in the river to pray.
As I went down in the river to pray.
Studying about that good old way.
And who shall wear the starry crown.
Good Lord, show me the way.
Oh brothers, let's go down.
Let's go down, come on down.
Come on, brothers, let's go down.
Down in the river to pray.
As I went down in the river to pray.
Studying about that good old way.
And who shall wear the starry crown.
Good Lord, show me the way.
Oh sinners, let's go down.
Let's go down, come on down.
Oh sinners, let's go down.
Down in the river to pray.
As I went down in the river to pray.
Studying about that good old way.
And who shall wear the starry crown.

Good Lord, show me the way.

The Rev. Dr. Monica Sanford:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Dr. Monica Sanford:

Can you hear me okay?

Congregation:

Yes.

The Rev. Dr. Monica Sanford:

Thank you. Yesterday, we marked one year of war, and 1,000 years of war. 10,000, depending on where we wanted to start counting. Has the human race ever been at peace, really? It's enough to get you down. And I have no uplifting words of wisdom to share, no personal stories of struggle or triumph. I'm neither Jew nor Muslim nor Christian. It's not my Jerusalem. But isn't it? Isn't it everyone's? Every day, I indict myself for what I'm not doing. Every day, I indict myself for not knowing what the right thing is to do, even. Other than the obvious, of course. Make peace, I pray. Make peace. But make it without me, because I don't know how to make it for you.

When my dogs fight, I can grab them each by the scruff and give them a good shake. You can't do that to people or nations, and the impulse to try is a sign of a deep moral character deficiency, I admit. How patronizing, how parochial, how dehumanizing can such a comparison be. But the hope is the same. Make peace. It's a selfish prayer; make peace for me, so that I don't have to hear about another bombing, another hostage killed, another drone strike on the news during my morning drive. It's a petty prayer. Because the compassion that it takes to reckon with the real situation, the children dead, hostages missing, the amputated limbs, the starving, the grieving, the sick from cholera, that all hurts just too, too much. Easier to focus on my petty cares than face the horror far away in Israel, Gaza, Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Niger, Mali.

But it's not really that far, is it? Across the hall from me, they're grieving. And if I'm honest, in my room, I am grieving too, when I let myself. How do we not walk through our days sobbing in a world like this, after 10,000 years of war? The reporter on the news said that the Sudanese woman laughed at him when he jumped at the sound of a mortar during their interview. She doesn't jump anymore. Mortars are just a fact of life, like rain or fruit flies. We get numb to it all as a survival instinct. I don't want to be numb, but I also don't want to be petty, and I don't want to hurt, and I don't want to grieve. I want to have wisdom to share. I want to know how to make peace, both for others and within myself. I don't, either one.

This is not a sermon, so much as a confession. And not a confession, so much as a witnessing. And in the witnessing, a lament. And from the lament, a prayer from someone who knows not how to pray. I'm just a Buddhist chaplain, and a bad one, because my Buddha is dead and cannot hear me. In life, he stood between armies and knew just what to say to make peace. I'm not so enlightened as the historic Buddha who stood between armies, and has been dead for over 2,000 years, but sometimes I pray to him anyway.

And in that prayer there is a strange kind of hope, because if I want peace, even in my relatively untroubled life so far away from Israel, Gaza, Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Niger, and Mali, if I want peace, surely others might. Just as we can share this grief, surely we can share this hope. Maybe? Just a little. I don't have wisdom, but maybe I can share hope, that for as long as humans have made war, we have also made peace, eventually, everywhere and always, we have also made peace. May we become ever better at peace. [Sanskrit 00:12:06].

This comes from the Dhammapada and its associated commentary. This instruction was given by the teacher while he was in residence among the Sakyas, with reference to the cessation of a quarrel amongst his kinsmen. "The story goes that the Sakyas and the Koliyas caused the waters of the River Rohini to be confined by a single dam between the city of Kapilavatthu and the city of Koliya, and cultivated the fields on both sides of the river. Now, in the month of [Pali 00:12:44], the crops began to droop, whereupon the laborers employed by the residents of both cities assembled. Said the residents of the city of Koliya, 'If this water is diverted to both sides of the river, there will not be enough both for you and for us too. But our crops will ripen with a single watering. Therefore, let us have the water.'"

"The Sakyas replied, 'Our crops will also ripen with a single watering. Therefore, let us have this water.' 'We will not give it to you.' 'Neither will we give it to you.' Talk waxed bitter, until finally, one arose and struck another a blow. The other returned the blow and a general fight ensued, the combatants making matters worse by aspersions to the origins of the two royal families. As the teacher surveyed the world at dawn and beheld his kinsmen, he thought to himself, 'If I refrain from going to them, these men will destroy each other. It is clearly my duty to go to them.'"

"Accordingly, he flew through the air quite alone to the spot where his kinsmen were gathered together, and seated himself cross-legged in the air over the middle of the River Rohini. When the teacher's kinsmen saw the teacher, they threw away their weapons and did reverence to him. Said the teacher to his kinsmen, 'What is all this quarrel about?' Finally, they answered, 'The quarrel is about water, reverend sir.' Then the teacher asked the king, 'How much is water worth, great king?' 'Very little, reverend sir.' 'How much are the [Sanskrit 00:14:14] worth?' 'Great king, [Sanskrit 00:14:17] are beyond price, reverend sir.' 'It is not fitting that, because of a little water, you should destroy [Sanskrit 00:14:23], who are beyond price.' They were silent."

"Then the teacher addressed them and said, 'Great kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not here present today, you would set flowing a river of blood. You have done what should not be done. You live in strife. I live free from strife. You live afflicted with the sickness of evil passions. I live free from disease. You live in eager pursuit of the five kinds of sensual pleasure. I live free from eager pursuit.'" So saying, he pronounced the following stanzas, which are recorded in the Dhammapada, verses 197 through 199.

"We live indeed so happily, unhating amidst the haters. Among those who hate, we dwell free from hate. We live indeed so happily, well amidst the sick, amongst those who are ailing we dwell free from illness. We live indeed so happily, ungreedy amidst the greedy. Among those who are greedy, we dwell free from greed." Thus, it was said.

The Rev. Dr. Calvon Jones:

All who are able, please rise, in body and spirit, for prayer. Let us pray. Loving God, we want peace. God of justice, may we strive for a world of peace and not strife. May we strive for a world of peace and not hatred. May we walk in love. May we walk in compassion. In your name we pray. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, saying, "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, 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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, amen."

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, 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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, amen."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now let us sing hymn number 204, Dear Mother God, found in your hymnal.

MUSIC:

Dear Mother God, your wings are warm around us.
We are enfolded in your love and care.
Safe in the dark, your heartbeat's pulse surrounds us.
You call to us, for you are always there.
You call to us, for we are in your image.
We wait on you, the nest is cold and bare.
High overhead your wing-beats call us onward.
Filled with your power, we ride the empty air.
Let not our freedom scorn the needs of others.
We climb the clouds until our strong heart sings.
May we enfold our sisters and our brothers.
Till all are strong, till all have eagles' wings.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Dear Mother God, "may we enfold our sisters and our brothers till all are strong, till all have eagles' wings." Now as you leave this place, but never away from God's presence, as you leave this gathering, but never away from God's love, may the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit rest, rule, and abide, henceforth now and forevermore. May we go into the world striving for peace and love. Let us bless the Lord.

Congregation:

Thanks be to God.

[inaudible 00:20:26].

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