

## Deep peace

Micah 5:2-5

December 20, 2015

*Deep peace of the running wave to you,  
deep peace of the flowing air to you,  
deep peace of the quiet earth to you,  
deep peace of the shining stars to you,  
deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.*

Deep peace. Have you known it? Have you experienced it?

Deep peace. Something more than a quiet moment away from the bustle. Something deeper than sinking into a chair with a cup of tea or a glass of wine after a hectic day.

Deep peace. A sense of well-being, of balance, that seeps into your bones and engulfs your soul. A sense of ... well, peace, of being whole, of being connected, free of fret or discord or conflict.

Have you known it? Have you experienced it? Where? Is there a place, a particular place, that whenever you are there in that place you find peace, deep peace?

We each have our own places of peace, many different places, many different kinds of places, because, of course, the peace is not in the place, but in you. The peace comes from within you.

Hogwash! Malarkey! Poppycrack! Deep peace doesn't come from within you. Otherwise, why wouldn't you have it all the time? Why would you have to go anywhere at all to find it? But you do find it, in your special place. Peace does come from the place. Deep peace comes to you from something outside you.

This is my special place, one of my special places. It is the back side of McGlathery Island in the Deer Isle Archipelago off Stonington, Maine. Lynne and I set our kayaks into the water from the stone ramp behind behind the ferry terminal in Stonington and paddle among the spruce-covered islands, watching for osprey and seals and harbor porpoises. We often land on the short sand beach in the natural harbor on the town side of McGlathery. We eat our lunch and then Lynne finds her deep peace sitting in a camp chair soaking up the sun while I go exploring. I waded through a narrow tidal gut, then clamber over huge



granite boulders to reach the ocean side of the island, and then ... It's not just that it's pretty. It's not just the beautiful views. It's something else, something deeper. It's the water, deep and dark, gently moving, gently running. It's the air, blowing, flowing softly against my face, fresh and clean and scented of ocean and ocean creatures. It's the rock, the enormous granite boulders, jumbled but in the right places, in their places, not neat, not orderly, but hard, real, bright, lasting.

The back side of McGlathery Island is a place apart, a place that takes me away, far away, from everywhere else I have been, but it feels like home. It feels like where I belong. Only it's not quite right to say "I belong," because I have very little awareness of "I" at all. I am simply in that place, part of that place. Part of it. Part of the moving water. Part of the gentle breeze. Part of the hard and silent rock.

Deep peace of the running wave, of the flowing air, of the quiet earth. The first four lines of this old gaelic blessing are not at all incidental. What are wave and air and earth and stars? These are the four elements of ancient wisdom, the four constituent elements of nature and of all life: earth, air, water, and fire. Or, in more modern terms, these are the four states of matter: solid, liquid, gas, and plasma, plasma being the ionized gases you find in flame or lightning or stars, the most abundant form of known matter in the universe.

Deep peace comes from an experience of connection to matter, of being fundamentally connected to what I am made of. I am matter. Matter is my substance. It is in our special places, away from the usual distractions and diversions, that we remember where we came from, that we remember what we are, that we are re-connected to our own essential being. Deep peace comes from an experience of simply being, being in harmony with the elements from which I come and of which I am.

But there is a fifth line to the blessing: "deep peace of the Son of Peace to you." I am matter, but not just matter. I am spirit, too, spirit, breath, image of God, breathed into me by the God who made me. I am made of matter, but made of God, too, made to be connected to God and connected to you. Deep peace is a sense of well-being, of balance, of being whole, of being connected -- to God and to each other, to all of creation and even to my own self. But I cannot make that connection, it has to come to me from outside me.

"He will bring peace."

He will bring peace: the Son of Peace, the peace-bearer. He will come as one of us, made of matter, too, but as one in whom God and flesh, spirit and body, outside and inside, are perfectly joined. He will come to us as one in complete communion with God, inviting us too into that communion. In union with him we remember where we came from. In union with him we remember what we are. In union with him we are re-connected to our own essential being, which is to be re-connected with God. In union with him, we may simply be, knowing at last the deep peace which God intends for us.

And that is good news, good news that brings great joy to all the people.

*This very day in David's town your Savior was born -- Christ the Lord!  
Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all God's people.*

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