

John 14:27 (KJV)
August 13, '17

Secular Songs That Speak to the Soul
“LET IT BE”

I FEEL COMPELLED TO OFFER A DISCLAIMER OF SORTS AT THE OUTSET OF THIS SERMON & THIS PORTION OF OUR SUMMER SERMON *SERIES*.

THE SERIES IS FOCUSED ON “*BOOKS, FILMS & SONGS THAT CONVEY A SPIRITUAL MESSAGE WITHOUT NECESSARILY BEING OVERTLY RELIGIOUS.*”

I DON'T CLAIM TO HAVE ANY SPECIAL CREDENTIALS THAT WOULD ENABLE ME TO LAY CLAIM TO BEING EITHER A BOOK OR FILM CRITIC.

AND AS WE COME TO THE THIRD SECTION ON SONGS, THAT'S EVEN MORE TRUE THAN IT WAS FOR BOOKS & FILMS!

THAT BEING SAID, IN ALL THREE CATEGORIES, I'M SPEAKING ABOUT BOOKS, FILMS & SONGS THAT HAVE PERSONALLY TOUCHED ME IN A SPIRITUAL FASHION.

THE POINT OF IT ALL IS THAT THERE ARE SPIRITUAL MESSAGES ALL AROUND US EVERY DAY IF WE WOULD BUT OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE THEM & OUR EARS TO HEAR THEM.

IN THIS FINAL SECTION ON SONGS WE'RE OBVIOUSLY TALKING ABOUT THAT SECOND DIRECTIVE – OPENING OUR *EARS TO HEAR* A SPIRITUAL MESSAGE IN THE MUSIC THAT WE LISTEN TO EVERY DAY.

THIS SECTION IS TRICKIER BECAUSE MUSIC TASTES VARY SO WIDELY FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER.

FOR THAT REASON, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GOOD TO START WITH POPULAR MUSIC THAT HAS A BROAD APPEAL.

CAN ANYONE REALLY ARGUE WITH THE BEATLES?

THEY MAY NOT BE YOUR FAVORITE, BUT YOU CAN'T REALLY DISLIKE THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES, CAN YOU?

THEIR APPEAL SPANS THE GENERATIONS.

ALL THREE OF OUR GRANDSONS – AGE 2 TO 7 – ARE ABSOLUTELY ENTHRALLED WITH THE BEATLES.

AT LEAST ONE OF OUR CHURCH TEEN-AGERS HAS SEEN PAUL MCARTNEY IN CONCERT, A YOUNG MOTHER OF TWO IN OUR CONGREGATION KNOWS MORE ABOUT THE BEATLES THAN ANYONE ELSE SITTING HERE THIS MORNING & A 50-YEAR-OLD HAS SEEN MCARTNEY MORE THAN A HALF-DOZEN TIMES.

THOSE IN THEIR 80'S WERE IN THEIR EARLY THIRTIES IN THE HEYDAY OF THE BEATLES.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, IT HAS BEEN MY SUNDAY MORNING RITUAL TO LISTEN OUR SON DREW'S VERSION OF "HERE COMES THE SUN" ON MY WAY TO CHURCH.

THE SONG ENDS IMMEDIATELY AS I PULL INTO MY PARKING SPOT, SO I KNOW THAT IT TAKES ME EXACTLY 3 MINUTES & 51 SECONDS TO GET FROM MY HOUSE TO CHURCH.

SO YES, THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES DOES INDEED SPAN THE GENERATIONS.

IN CHOOSING A BEATLES' SONG FOR OUR FOCUS IN THIS SERIES, THERE ARE A LOT OF GOOD OPTIONS.

"ELEANOR RIGBY DIED IN THE CHURCH & WAS BURIED ALONG WITH HER NAME – NOBODY CAME.

***ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE. WHERE DO THEY ALL COME FROM?
ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE. WHERE DO THEY ALL BELONG?"***

THOSE ARE WORDS THAT CAN BREAK YOUR HEART BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THE ELEANOR RIGBYS OF THE WORLD – THOSE WHO ARE LONELY & FORGOTTEN.

AND CAN'T YOU JUST HEAR THE PRODIGAL SON SINGING TO HIS FATHER - *“THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD THAT LEADS TO YOUR DOOR WILL NEVER DISAPPEAR?”*

EVEN A SONG WITH SEEMINGLY SILLY LYRICS LIKE “HELP” HAS A MESSAGE FOR US – *“WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, SO MUCH YOUNGER THAN TODAY, I NEVER NEEDED ANYBODY’S HELP IN ANY WAY.*

BUT NOW THOSE DAYS ARE GONE AND I’M NOT SO SELF-ASSURED. NOW I FIND I’VE CHANGED MY MIND, I’VE OPENED UP THE DOORS. HELP ME IF YOU CAN, I’M FEELING DOWN.”

OF WRITING THAT SONG, JOHN LENNON SAID, *“IT WAS JUST ME SINGING ‘HELP’ AND I MEANT IT.”*

WE ALL NEED ONE ANOTHER.

OR WHAT ABOUT A SONG LIKE “BLACKBIRD?”

YESTERDAY’S EVENTS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA ARE A POIGNANT REMINDER THAT A SONG LIKE “BLACKBIRD” IS AS RELEVANT TODAY AS IT WAS 50 YEARS AGO WHEN PAUL MCARTNEY WROTE IT.

HE WAS INSPIRED BY THE YOUNG BLACK CHILDREN WHO HAD COURAGEOUSLY INTEGRATED THE LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS SCHOOLS & HE WROTE THE SONG IN AN EFFORT TO INSPIRE *THEM.*

“BLACK BIRD SINGING IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

TAKE THESE SUNKEN EYES & LEARN TO SEE,

ALL YOUR LIFE, YOU WERE ONLY WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT TO BE FREE.”

THE EVIL WE SAW IN CHARLOTTESVILLE WOULD SEEK TO UNDO EVERYTHING THOSE CHILDREN & MILLIONS OF FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST HAVE FOUGHT FOR OVER THE PAST HALF CENTURY.

YES, WITH THE BEATLES, FOR EVERY “*ROCKY RACCOON,*” THERE’S AN “*ELEANOR RIGBY,*” FOR EVERY “*SHE CAME IN THROUGH THE BATHROOM WINDOW,*” THERE’S A “*LONG & WINDING ROAD*” & FOR EVERY “*MAXWELL’S SILVER HAMMER,*” THERE’S A “*BLACBIRD.*”

SO MANY OF THEIR SONGS CAN TOUCH US DEEPLY & THE ONE WE’VE CHOSEN FOR TODAY IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE.

THOSE THREE WORDS – “*LET IT BE*” – ARE WORDS THAT WE FIND IN SCRIPTURE & WHEN WE SEE THEM IN THE BIBLE, THE MESSAGE IS VERY MUCH THE SAME AS WHAT IS BEING PROCLAIMED IN THE SONG.

I READ THE SINGLE VERSE OF SCRIPTURE THIS MORNING FROM MY VERY FIRST BIBLE - ONE THAT WAS GIVEN TO ME BY MY GRANDMOTHER.

IT’S A RED-LETTER KING JAMES VERSION.

IF YOU HAVE A RED-LETTER VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE FIRST THREE WORDS YOU SEE IN THOSE RED LETTERS – THE FIRST RECORDED WORDS OF JESUS - ARE “LET IT BE” – THE WORDS HE SAYS TO JOHN AT HIS BAPTISM IN MATTHEW’S GOSPEL – “LET IT BE SO NOW, FOR IT IS PROPER FOR US IN THIS WAY TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

HE’S COMMITTING HIMSELF INTO GOD’S HANDS & GOD’S CARE.

“LET IT BE.”

IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, WHEN THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITS MARY & TELLS HER SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD, MARY SAYS “LET IT BE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD.”

SHE'S COMMITTING HERSELF INTO GOD'S HANDS AND GOD'S CARE.

"LET IT BE."

THAT SINGLE VERSE WE READ THIS MORNING FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL IS A VERSE THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE FIRST VERSE I HAVE READ AT EVERY "SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION" THAT I HAVE EVER CONDUCTED.

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU. MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED. NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID."

AND THERE ARE THOSE WORDS ONCE AGAIN.

"NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID."

"LET IT BE."

THE MESSAGE FOR US IS THE SAME.

WE ARE TO HAVE THE SAME UNDERSTANDING, THE SAME PEACE, THE SAME ASSURANCE, THE SAME COMFORT AS THAT CONVEYED BY JESUS & MARY IN THOSE PREVIOUS OCCURRENCES OF THAT PHRASE.

LET IT BE.

WE'RE BEING CALLED TO COMMIT OUR LIVES INTO GOD'S HANDS & GOD'S CARE.

I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS ABOUT A SONG SUCH AS THIS.

WITH A TUNE AS SIMPLE AS IT IS, WHEN WE HEAR IT ON THE RADIO OR HEAR IT IN OUR MIND, THAT MESSAGE OF PEACE, COMFORT & ASSURANCE CAN BE OURS.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SONG IS RATHER FASCINATING.

WHILE ITS MESSAGE IS BASICALLY ONE OF COMFORT, THERE HAS BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING OF IT THAT HAS LED PEOPLE TO THINK THE ORIGINAL INTENT WAS MORE RELIGIOUS THAN IT IS.

WHEN WE HEAR PAUL SING, “*MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME, SPEAKING WORDS OF WISDOM...*,” THE NATURAL CONCLUSION THAT IT IS DRAWN IS THAT HE’S REFERRING TO MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

AFTER ALL, PAUL WAS RAISED AS A ROMAN CATHOLIC, SO A REFERENCE TO MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, WOULD SEEM LOGICAL.

THE TRUTH OF THE SONG’S ORIGIN, THOUGH, IS QUITE DIFFERENT.

MCARTNEY WROTE THE SONG DURING A TIME OF GREAT TURMOIL.

HE HAD TURMOIL IN HIS OWN LIFE, THERE WAS TURMOIL WITH THE BAND & IN THE FALL OF 1968, THERE WAS TURMOIL ALL OVER THE WORLD.

HE EXPLAINS HOW THE SONG CAME TO LIFE: “*ONE NIGHT, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN DEEP SLEEP & INSOMNIA, I HAD THE MOST COMFORTING DREAM ABOUT MY MOTHER, WHO DIED WHEN I WAS ONLY 14.*

SHE HAD BEEN A NURSE, MY MUM, AND VERY HARDWORKING, BECAUSE SHE WANTED THE BEST FOR US.

SHE WAS JUST A VERY COMFORTING PRESENCE IN MY LIFE. AND WHEN SHE DIED, ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES I HAD, AS THE YEARS WENT BY, WAS THAT I COULDN’T RECALL HER FACE SO EASILY.

SO IN THIS DREAM 12 YEARS LATER, MY MOTHER APPEARED, AND THERE WAS HER FACE, COMPLETELY CELAR, PARTICULARLY HER EYES, AND SHE SAID TO ME VERY GENTLY, VERY REASSURINGLY: ‘LET IT BE.’

IT WAS LOVELY. I WOKE UP WITH A GREAT FEELING. IT WAS REALLY LIKE SHE HAD VISITED ME AT THIS VERY DIFFICULT POINT IN MY LIFE & GAVE ME THIS MESSAGE: ‘BE GENTLE, DON’T FIGHT THINGS, JUST TRY & GO WITH THE FLOW & IT WILL ALL WORK OUT.’

SO, BEING A MUSICIAN, I WENT RIGHT OVER TO THE PIANO AND STARTED WRITING A SONG: ‘WHEN I FIND MYSELF IN TIMES OF TROUBLE, MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME’...MARY WAS MY MOTHER’S NAME... ‘SPEAKING WORDS OF WISDOM, LET IT BE.’”

EVEN THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SONG CAME ABOUT HAS A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION, DOESN’T IT?

DREAMS PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT & THE NEW WITH A JOSEPH FROM EACH BEING PROMINENT EXAMPLES.

WHILE THE FIRST VERSE OF THE SONG MIGHT SPEAK TO ONE’S PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES, THE SECOND VERSE GOES A STEP FURTHER:

“WHEN ALL THE BROKEN-HEARTED PEOPLE, LIVING IN THE WORLD AGREE, THERE WILL BE AN ANSWER, LET IT BE.”

WE ALL SUFFER.

WE ALL STRUGGLE.

WE ALL ENDURE HEARTACHE & SORROW.

IT’S THE ONE COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT HOLDS US TOGETHER.

AND PAUL ADDS TO THAT: *“FOR THOUGH THEY MAY BE PARTED, THERE IS STILL A CHANCE THAT THEY WILL SEE...”*

IN A TIME SUCH AS OURS, WHEN THE WORLD AND EVEN OUR OWN NATION SEEMS TO BE MORE PARTED & DIVIDED THAN EVER BEFORE, THERE'S AN UPLIFTING WORD OF HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT – “*THERE WILL BE AN ANSWER, LET IT BE.*”

IF WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO CARRY THE SONG'S SCRIPTURAL ALLUSIONS TO COMPLETION, WE FIND IT NEAR THE VERY END.

“THERE WILL BE NO SORROW. LET IT BE.”

WE HEAR THAT ASSURANCE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

“...GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM. HE WILL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES. THERE WILL BE NO MORE DEATH OR MOURNING OR CRYING OR PAIN.”

**WHEN IT COMES TO “SECULAR SONGS THAT SPEAK TO THE SOUL, PAUL MCARTNEY HAS GIVEN US ONE OF THE VERY BEST.
(PLAY SONG)**

“LET IT BE”

**When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, Let it be**

**And in my hour of darkness, she is standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom, Let it be**

**Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom**

**When all the broken-hearted people, Living in the world agree
There will be an answer, Let it be**

**For though they may be parted, there is still a chance that they will see
There will be an answer, Let it be**

**Let it be, let it be, let it be, yeah, let it be
There will be an answer, Let it be**

**Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, Let it be**

Yeah, let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be

There will be an answer, Let it be

Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
There will be an answer, Let it be

And when the night is cloudy, There is still a light that shines on me
Shine until tomorrow, Let it be

I wake up to the sound of music, Mother Mary comes to me
There will be no sorrow, Let it be

Let it be, let it be, let it be, yeah, let it be
There will be no sorrow, Let it be

Let it be, let it be, let it be, yeah, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, Let it be

**WHEN LIFE SEEMS TO CRASH IN UPON YOU, WHEN HOPE IS
FLEETING & TROUBLES THREATEN TO OVERWHELM YOU, MAY YOU
ENDEAVOR TO TAKE THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS IN HIS JORDAN
ENCOUNTER WITH JOHN THE BAPTIST, MARY IN HER NIGHTTIME
ENCOUNTER WITH THE ANGEL GABRIEL, AND PAUL IN HIS DREAM
ENCOUNTER WITH HIS MOTHER.**

**WHEN YOU COMMIT YOURSELV TO GOD’S HANDS & GOD’S CARE,
YOU’RE ABLE TO “LET GO & LET GOD.”**

YOU’RE ABLE TO SIMPLY “LET IT BE.” AMEN.

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