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Yoga Talk #35
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Be Here Now

Imagine the place where you feel most at home, where you are comfortable and safe, the place where you have the greatest chance of feeling abiding joy. This morning we talked about this as I met with a couple who are getting married in a month. We agreed that every day you wake up and never know what you might remember forever.

I told them about my wedding day 27 years ago. Standing at the altar, the doors of the church were opened and the brightest sunlight flooded in. As someone held the bell rope to the side my wife ducked and stepped into the building. I remember the sound of the waves breaking on the rocks outside the open window and the sweep of her arms as she danced hula during the service. I remember walking next to my best friend down the aisle past everyone who mattered most to us and into a new life.

Because our past is so rich it is tempting to spend too much of our time there. The theologian Karl Barth (CD III.2, Ch. X) writes that the only past we have is an ever-changing and evolving story of what has happened. The future is merely a collection of our fantasies and fears about what will come.

We are in time. All we really have is Now. We constantly cross this boundary from the past to the future. It is Now that we will have or not have, be or not be, know or not know, act or fail to act.¹ We have time. God gives it to us. And every now comes only once – whether we perceive and grasp it, or fail to.

Last night I interviewed Alonzo King the founder of LINES Ballet. He said that a cathedral is a nuclear site, a kind of constellation of subatomic particles. It is in the shape of the body with legs, arms, a head and that the altar sits at its heart. The height of the pillars, the color of the stained glass are images of the depth we experience in ourselves. It is related to our body.

A cathedral certainly is connected to the past but the whole reason for its existence is for us to really be here now, to bring us back to our spiritual selves. We are spiritual beings and this means two things. First it involves recognizing our connection to each other and the world. Second, being a spiritual person means cultivating a sense of gratitude toward our creator for the beauty of life.

I'm surprised how often people ask me if I get ideas for sermons while I am surfing at Ocean Beach. In those moments I am so deeply attuned to the conditions, looking so intently at the horizon that the past and future completely slip away. In that moment I exist entirely in the Now. I am completely alive.

Tonight as we practice together I pray that this may become a place where you are spiritually at home. May the architecture of this cathedral, the collected wisdom of your yoga practice will bring you deep into the present moment. I pray that you will experience your connection to all things, that you will receive the gift that is this moment.

¹ <http://karlbarthchurchdogmatics.blogspot.com/2016/01/barth-volume-iii2.html>