

Devotional—day 14

"By My Side"

Where are you going?
Where are you going?
Can you take me with you?
For my hand is cold and needs warmth.
Where are you going?

Far beyond
Where the horizon lies,
And land sinks into mellow blueness.

O, please take me with you.
Let me skip the road with you
I can dare myself
I can dare
I'll put a pebble in my shoe
And watch me walk,
I can walk and walk.
I shall call the pebble dare.

We will talk together about walking
Dare shall be carried.
And when we both have had enough
I will take him from my shoe, singing:
"Meet your new road."

Then I'll take your hand,
Finally glad
That you are here
By my side.

- *Patty Gordon and Jay Hamburger, 1971*

Behind the Music...

My involvement with *GODSPELL* began when I was asked to see it at the Cafe LaMama (an off-off-Broadway theatre) by the producers, Edgar Lansbury and Joseph Beruh, who hoped to move it to off-Broadway for a commercial run. They wanted me to provide an original score for the show, which I subsequently did. However, at the time I saw it, there were a few songs in the show, written by cast members or interpolated from pop writers of the day. One of those songs was "By My Side." When I began working on the score, I felt that while I could try to write another song for the same moment, this song was beautiful and already existed, so why not retain it? The producers and director agreed, and so "By My Side" remained in the show. So you see, it actually preceded my score. - *Stephen Schwartz*

John 13:33-38 (The Message)

33 "Children, I am with you for only a short time longer. You are going to look high and low for me. But just as I told the Jews, I'm telling you: 'Where I go, you are not able to come.' 34 "Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. 35 This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples - when they see the love you have for each other." 36 Simon Peter asked, "**Master, just where are you going?**" Jesus answered, "You can't now follow me where I'm going. You will follow later." 37 "Master," said Peter, "why can't I follow now? I'll lay down my life for you!" 38 "Really? You'll lay down your life for me? The truth is that before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times."

John 14:1-17 (The Message)

1 "Don't let this throw you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. 2 There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? 3 And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. 4 And you already know the road I'm taking." 5 Thomas said, "**Master, we have no idea where you're going. How do you expect us to know the road?**" 6 Jesus said, "I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You've even seen him!" 8 Philip said, "Master, show us the Father; then we'll be content." 9 "You've been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don't understand? To see me is to see the Father. So how can you ask, 'Where is the Father?' 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren't mere words. I don't just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act. 11 "Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see - these works. 12 The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing. You can count on it. 13 From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. 14 Whatever you request in this way, I'll do. 15 If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. 16 I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. 17 This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!"

John 16:1-15 (The Message)

1 "I've told you these things to prepare you for rough times ahead. 2 They are going to throw you out of the meeting places. There will even come a time when anyone who kills you will think he's doing God a favor. 3 They will do these things because they never really understood the Father. 4 I've told you these things so that when the time comes and they start in on you, you'll be well-warned and ready for them. 5 But now I am on my way to the One who sent me. **Not one of you has asked, 'Where are you going?'** 6 Instead, the longer I've talked, the sadder you've become. 7 So let me say it again, this truth: It's better for you that I leave. If I don't leave, the Friend won't come. But if I go, I'll send him to you. 8 "When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; 10 that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father, out of their sight and control; 11 that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted. 12 "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. 13 But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. 14 He will honor me; he will take from me and deliver it to you. 15 Everything the Father has is also mine. That is why I've said, 'He takes from me and delivers to you.'

**From the *Faith and Fire Fellowship* website: www.faithandfire.org
By Pastor Maria**

I was personally touched by the movie *Godspell*. Many brand it as blasphemous. I call it a clever way of reaching people with God's Word.

This particular song reached me at the time when I was a young Christian -- not only for its folk style, for the beautiful singing and passion in the voices, but especially for the lyrics. What do the lyrics mean?

Well, these are my own ideas... no research into what the song writer intended, just what I read, what I feel and how I believe the Lord touched me with these words -- and why I can't finish singing this song without weeping.

Simon Peter said, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I go, you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterwards." (John 13:36)

In the song the person is asking Jesus, "*Where are you going?*" She is in need. She is challenged by Him in her heart. "*Can you take me with you? For my hand is cold and needs warmth...*" There is something missing in her. She knows that she needs help to find it. Perhaps Jesus is the one who can help. Where is He going?

"*Far beyond where the horizon lies and the land sinks into mellow blueness.*" is where the Jesus is headed, to heaven, to bring salvation to the world. "Oh please, take me with you."

But Jesus can't take her. She has to come on her own. He can't take her hand, not yet.

Like a child who is determined to learn to walk, "*I can dare myself!*" She can dare herself to take the first step toward Jesus.

"*I'll put a pebble in my shoe... I shall call the pebble dare.*" The pebble is her two-fold symbolic reminder.

Not that her walk would be painful, but that her walk would remind her that she is on a search, on a mission of discovery. Hey Jesus, "watch me walk, watch me walk, I can walk, I can walk!" Like a child who wants her parent to see her accomplishment, she dared herself to take the first step toward following Jesus. Elated, she wants Him to see that she has gathered Dare to stand and walk.

And they will "*talk together about walking.*" Along the way, she will listen and learn about the way, the truth and the life.

"*Dare shall be carried.*" Daring yourself to take the first step toward Jesus can be hard, but equally difficult can be the road to your decision. A child staggers, sometimes falls, then walks and eventually runs. The pebble would perhaps, remind her of her past, or the reason why she is following. But more importantly, would remind her of her present purpose, that on this walk she must focus and not be swayed by the temptations along the way that may lead her away from getting to her destination.

Her destination: "*... and when we both have had enough, I will take him (Dare) from my shoe, singing, 'Meet your new road!'*" She will show Dare that she has arrived at her faith. She no longer needs to be dared to follow the Lord. Salvation has come. She is now on her new road, and instead of merely following Jesus, she will take His hand, "*finally glad*" that she now understands the way, the truth and the life, and that He will always be there, **By Her Side!**

Time for personal reflection (Day 14):

Main Entry: **dare**

Pronunciation: 'dar, 'der

Function: verb

Etymology: Middle English *dar* (1st & 3d sing. present indic.), from Old English *dear*, akin to Old High German *gitar* (1st & 3d singular present indicative) *dare*, Greek *tharsos* courage

1 a : to challenge to perform an action especially as a proof of courage <dared him to jump>

b : to confront boldly : DEFY <dared the anger of his family>

2 : to have the courage to contend against, venture, or try <the actress dared a new interpretation of this classic role>

I'm sure I have asked the question "Where are you going?" many times in my life, to friends and loved ones. What feelings/emotions most often bring me to ask that question of others?

What feelings/emotions could have possibly prompted Simon Peter to ask this question of Jesus?

What moments in my life have prompted me to ask God, "Where?" - "Where are you?" "Where am I?" etc. In those moments, have I had to "dare" myself to continue my walk?

Have I "had enough" and reached my destination? Can I honestly say "that [God is] here, by my side?"