

**ANOTHER
NAME
FOR EVERY
THING**

with

RICHARD ROHR

Season 1, Episode 1

Christ Soaked World

Paul Swanson: Welcome to season one of Another Name for Every Thing, casual conversations with Richard Rohr exploring the core themes of his new book, The Universal Christ.

Brie Stoner: This podcast was recorded in a tiny hermitage on the grounds of the Center for Action and Contemplation, a nonprofit founded by Richard Rohr, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Because of that, you may hear neighborhood sounds such as sirens, dogs, and the occasional llama. We are your hosts.

Paul Swanson: I'm Paul Swanson.

Brie Stoner: And I'm Brie Stoner. We are staff members of the of the Center for Action and Contemplation and students of this contemplative path, trying our best to live the wisdom of this tradition amidst diapers, disruptions, and the shifting state of our world.

Paul Swanson: This is the first of twelve weekly episodes. Today we'll be discussing the first chapter entitled "Christ is Not Jesus's Last Name."

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As we talk about the themes of The Universal Christ, how do you explain the Christ to a child?

Richard Rohr: Wow. Well, let me start with this, and you know this as parents. The wonderful thing is that they don't have trouble believing what you say to them, which is why you're taking such risks if you don't give good stuff. But you know, just like they believe animals can talk and animals can be their friends, they understand relationship, friendship, through the way you've mediated friendship to them as mother, father.

So, you know, certainly the most simple language of love, caring for you, protecting you, always, everywhere, all the time, they don't have trouble believing that kind of language. To us, it almost sounds sentimental and like a sales job. I don't think it's heard by a small child as a sales job, but a wonderful unfolding presence that they can rely upon. So, any language that communicates presence, availability, caring, protection, because as you know, children do have their little fears at night, and so forth. You wonder where that early fear comes from.

But to be assured that there's someone protecting them, and they're not alone, and there's someone they can call upon, yeah. I mean, they're not ready for my dang sophisticated theology of distinction between Jesus and Christ. They don't need it yet. They don't need it. I think now we need it, but children don't, you know. It's all presence, presence, however you can communicate presence, and caring presence.

The trouble is a lot of us, and I'm not trying to be negative, but a lot of us were raised with threatening presence. "He's watching you, and sees everything you do, and knows every thought you have," and always said in a terribly threatening way. That was not at all a good communication of the Christ presence. In fact, it was the antichrist. It was the opposite of the experience. Yeah.

Brie Stoner: You mentioned relationships as being part of how we build that sense of presence with children, and I wonder, what relationships in your life have been part of the significant

expansion into a more cosmic Christ? You know, I think for myself, many of the greatest recognitions haven't been theoretical. They've been through—

Richard Rohr: Concrete, yeah.

Brie Stoner: --relationships, so I wonder if you could share any of the relationships that come to mind for you, that helped you experience the Universal Christ.

Richard Rohr: Yes. I think it was precisely after I had, maybe by the intention of others, stretched myself into otherness. What came to mind this morning was I remembered when I was living in Dayton as a theologian. One of my ministries was to go to an inner city hospital, and they did an interview with my approach, and they said, "You're a one-man welcome wagon. You're overdoing it. Cool it," you know? I was trying so hard to console and meet all these people. But it was a genuinely Christ-soaked experience, because it was my first move, really, outside of the world that I had been living in, of Catholics who were mostly white, who were mostly middle class, and I remember that passing over that edge of, "How do I relate to a poor black man?"

Then, the recognition that not only could I do it, but it was wonderful. That was my early Christ experience. I think the Christ will always be experienced when you cross the line into otherness. If you try to pull it all into sameness, you stay with people just like me, I don't think you experience the Christ. You might have some cozy Jesus experiences, that you call Jesus experiences, but they're not even worthy of Jesus, because you're largely loving yourself, while thinking you've expanded the circle of encounter. There has to be an expanded circle, or it isn't Christ for you, you see? Yeah.

Paul Swanson: Richard, you used a phrase just a moment ago that is one of my favorite of yours, which is "Christ-soaked world." What does that phrase mean to you, and what can we learn from that imagery?

Richard Rohr: What I believe, and I believe the scriptures say, but we just weren't told to look for it, is that reality was christened, if I can use that word, from the very beginning, from the moment of its inception. Now, it's interesting that we use the metaphor of anointed, pouring oil over something to reveal its sacredness, starting with the stone of Jacob; Beth-el. This is the house of God. This is the gate of heaven.

So, we see this mounting recognition in the Bible, of presence, of presence. So I'm so glad that phrase struck you, that reality is already soaked with the presence, and we sought a metaphor like anointing, to remind us of what was already there, to say, "This is sacred." The oil doesn't make it sacred. The anointing of something makes you, hopefully, doesn't work a lot of the time for many people, and makes you aware, "This person, this rock, is sacred." So we anoint not just people, but at least in the Catholic church, we anoint the walls of churches, we anoint holy stones, to say, "This is presence." That's good stuff.

And of course, that's the meaning of the word Christ. Christ is simply the Greek word for Messiah, the anointed one. And the trouble is that we limited that anointing to the unique body of Jesus, and then didn't convince many people that was true, because once you go on the limiting course, "It's only here. It's not there," then you create argumentative Christianity, deciding what is anointed and what is not.

So, when I say “Christ-soaked world,” I’m talking a creation spirituality, that, well, Ephesians 1:3, It’s one of my favorite verses, “You were chosen in Christ from the beginning.” Farther on, “Before the world began, you were chosen.” So maybe he’s speaking of human election at that point. In Romans 8, he sees it in terms of nature, too, “All nature is longing to reveal the sons and daughters of God,” that even the natural world, as my father, Francis, says, his brother sun, sister moon, it’s all in the family of Christ-soaked-ness.

We just weren’t trained to see it that way, very unfortunately, and now we’ve thought we could torture animals, pollute the Earth, kill people who are not Christ-soaked, because we thought it was up to us to decide, “She’s got the anointing, and he doesn’t.” You cannot leave that choice to the human being. That choice comes from the divine anointing, and I don’t think we were able to see that, that we would always choose to find people like us, groups like us, countries like ours to be anointed.

And if you don’t mind me being a bit Catholic, you know what I’m going to say, but another thing that became usually argumentative was the presence in bread and wine. It’s just the same mystery. It’s saying, “It’s true at the elemental level.” Elements contain the presence. Now, we made it too much, “Well, the priest is the magician who makes the presence happen.” We brought it right back to our self, you know. Not the honoring of presence in the elemental world, of food in this case. That’s good stuff. It really is. If we’d only understood Eucharist as the taking of the notion of presence, not just to people but to things, and then Augustine’s notion of keep feeding people this thing, supposedly, until they know that they are what they eat, and they are the body of Christ too.

The whole thing is the body of Christ, but that’s a mystical knowing, and you’ll never be able to prove that, nor do you need to, because the journey toward that seeing is the journey toward enlightenment, and it is a journey. You don’t get it all in one minute. You get it by many moments of reverence, of respect, of, as Rumi would say, “Kneeling and kissing the ground.” Many moments like Jacob, of pouring the oil on the rock and saying, “This is the gate of heaven. This is it.” You know, by normal Jewish theology, that would be paganism. Sounds like a Hindu temple, doesn’t it?

Paul Swanson: Right.

Brie Stoner: Right.

Richard Rohr: Pouring oil on a rock and saying, “This is the gate of heaven”? I take that as the first concrete image of what became the Christ mystery.

Brie Stoner: Well, we’re so uncomfortable with this material reality, aren’t we?

Richard Rohr: Our own materiality and everything else.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, and that was made so much worse by that seeming incompatibility between Christianity and science, and kind of the way that that upheld that discomfort with materiality and made it easier to build theories of escaping out of this world. And so, that makes me think about our origin story. What was it that you were saying to me,

Paul? We were talking about origin story, and you said something about comic book heroes?

Paul Swanson: Yeah. I'm not a huge comic book person, at all.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, right.

Paul Swanson: But I find the origin stories of these kind of superheroes as this meta-narrative to be the most fascinating, the most interesting, and there seems to be like an elemental primacy in those stories, that are far more interesting than, say, stories that come later, about what is Thor up to in movie eight?

Brie Stoner: Yeah. It's like the importance of our origin story, and how that then impacts how we view the world. Specifically for myself, and for many of us growing up, being handed this creation story in which it all kind of boils down to a hungry woman with unfortunate timing, you know, there has to be something more for us beyond that story that can allow us to have a greater view. And I noticed you do that in your book. You talk a lot about the importance of creation, and "in the beginning," to name this Christ in the beginning. And I wonder if you could talk to us about what is the relationship between the origin story and Christ?

Richard Rohr: Wow, that's a book right there. How you begin sets the trajectory. You know, I just headed this weekend to a conference, that I say, "If there's any chapter or book of the Bible that's inspired, it's got to be the first chapter of Genesis." And yet, I would like to point out, isn't it interesting, even in the first and second chapters of Genesis, there are two, maybe three versions of the origin story.

Brie Stoner: Right.

Richard Rohr: Which are all lumped together, which was supposed to set us up, like the four gospels did. Did you know that there's not one official one? I don't know how people who had four gospels said there's only one true interpretation. Well, there's four interpretations of the same healing story, and almost every healing story in the New Testament, and the same in Genesis, that we have two, probably three, some say four, eventually in the book of Genesis, four different accounts. So already, we're given inspiration, but a hint that there's not only one way to see it.

This should have kept us from this horrible notion of supposedly Biblical inerrancy. But as you well know, that was bad enough, but then we didn't really begin with our origin story—original blessing: "It was good. It was good. It was good. It was good. It was very good," Genesis 1, but for a very perverse reason, it seems to me, we decided to begin with Genesis 3: the problem, the sin, eating that dang apple.

Brie Stoner: Bad timing.

Richard Rohr: I think the human mind likes to wrap itself around a problem and then think of itself as the problem solver. "See, my denomination has solved the problem by pouring water at the right time, with the right words, and baptizing." Think of all the fights we've had over baptism.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Who pours it? When do they pour it? What do they say?

Paul Swanson: Child or an adult.

Richard Rohr: A child or adult, yeah, and did they really have faith, or did they not have faith? It all became problem-solving Christianity. Whereas, the problem, really, and I'm not exaggerating, was solved in the first chapter. There is no problem. "It is good. It is good. It is good. It is good. It is very good." Well, no, it's really bad. We just prefer to start with the negative. Now we know with brain studies that that is true of the human brain, that it wraps around negativity, fear, and problems. It doesn't know how to rest in contentment. That's why we teach various processes of meditation, to learn how to rest in this-ness, in now-ness, in enough-ness, because you have to retrain the mind, at least at this point in history, but it must have often been that way, because most of history repeated this problem, of loving problems.

Brie Stoner: With our love of problems, did we just collapse Jesus into Christ and then leave that there, as opposed to seeing Christ as something, "It is good. It is good. It is good," from the beginning? How does that change it for us? How does Christ change our perspective on the origin story?

Richard Rohr: Well, you said it very well. In fact, I might quote you on that. We collapsed Jesus into Christ, and here's the problem with that. Now here I am with a problem, but it leaves 13.7 billion years empty of presence, empty of God. Are you really telling me, and am I supposed to believe, that God only started talking 2,000 years ago, or even four, to at most 5,000 years ago, which is a drip in time, with the beginning of the writing of the Bible? God was not talking before we wrote the Bible? That's why the early Franciscans believed that creation was the first Bible. Nature was the first Bible, which is stated, as you know, in Romans 1:20, "Everything we need to know about God is in the world as it is created," you know? Marvelous line.

But, yeah, we just pretty much had Jesus without Christ, and that's why I think this is such an important notion, because then this Jesus became something that we could capture and encapsulate in our moment of time, in our Spanish culture, American culture, Lutheran culture, whatever it might be. It was all too tiny. The Christ keeps Jesus from being tiny, or malleable, or usable, because it's too big for the human mind to contain it or control it.

Paul Swanson: That's so helpful.

Richard Rohr: It is helpful.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: It's like I'm preaching to myself. I just thought, "Why didn't I say this with that clarity forty years ago?" But we're ready for it now, even though I'm sure the book is going to get a lot of pushback. But I thought that from *The Naked Now* book, and it's the only book that I haven't got a single negative letter on. So, I'm ready to be surprised that people are ready for

a bigger frame, a bigger frame, a non-dual frame, that we're not lessening Jesus. We're not replacing Jesus with Christ, but we're saying the two notions, the two realities, balance and inform one another, and fulfill one another, really, both of them. Gosh, it just—

Brie Stoner: Changes everything.

Richard Rohr: It changes everything.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Brie Stoner: It really does.

Richard Rohr: That's why the initial title, as I gave, was Another Name for Every Thing.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: And that's Christ. And I do emphasize thing. It's not a name for every concept. Concepts are not enfleshment. "The word became flesh," so Christ is precisely thing-ness, reification, physicality, materiality, in rudimentary forms like rock, and all the way from there.

Brie Stoner: All the way up to our messy humanity.

Richard Rohr: Yeah, exactly.

Paul Swanson: Yeah. Following that thread, I'm curious, with the way that science and religion have been separated—

Richard Rohr: Oh, yeah, let's go there. Yeah.

Paul Swanson: --into two camps.

Richard Rohr: Go ahead.

Paul Swanson: It's ridiculous. And in a way, it seems like part of what you're offering in this book is how the Universal Christ can heal that divide.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: Can you speak more to that?

Richard Rohr: I'd love to. Do you see how, because we didn't understand embodiment, incarnation, which is our only real unique message in Christianity, we split again, with our dualistic mind, from those who analyze the physical world. They were beneath us. They were called scientists. They only knew about physicality. We know about spirituality. But what we failed to recognize is that the Spirit was hiding itself, revealing itself, knowing itself in and through physical reality. If we would not have made that split, we would have been much less eager to diminish or dismiss the scientific mind. They were knowing what could be seen with the eye. We were knowing, we hope, although not very well, it seems, the meaning, the full meaning, of what we were seeing with the physical eye. But those are not intention, well, maybe they're intention, but they're not in competition with one another.

Brie Stoner: Right.

Richard Rohr: Once we know the physical world is revealing the spiritual world, then, my gosh, engineers, mechanics, and scientists are our friends. We were talking a moment before about that marvelous Ken Burns' show on PBS last night, about the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and how much it was formed by the faith of these Franciscan nuns. I was so proud of them. They kept saying it all the way through the whole show. These nuns were Franciscans, who saw no problem with working together with doctors who were secular.

It was a wonderful message, you know? The doctors were secular, the nuns were spiritual, but they loved and trusted one another and produced, by most accounts, the greatest hospital on the Earth, you know? Because neither of them asked the other to compromise. The nuns respected the physical, medical training of the doctors, and for some wonderful reason, Dr. Mayo and his two sons respected, and needed, the love and the devotion of the nuns, who at that point, were all the nurses. All the nurses were nuns. So, they brought a different kind of devotion. None of them were doing it for salaries.

Paul Swanson: Wow.

Richard Rohr: None of them were doing it—So, they could help the poor from the beginning. And we didn't have the thing today where only the rich get healthcare.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. Anyway, I'm off the point now.

Paul Swanson: That's quite the embodiment of what you're saying—

Richard Rohr: It really is, yeah.

Paul Swanson: --of the spiritual and the science.

Brie Stoner: And I'm really moved by that phrase you just used, to say that, "We don't need to compromise one for the other." I think that's really a huge problem that so many of us have with the frameworks, and the religious paradigms that we've been handed, is that we were given them and asked to compromise our intellectual integrity, or our love of this world, or our love of creation. So, I find that to be really helpful, to think that there could be a Christianity in which I don't have to compromise my love of science or this world in any way.

Richard Rohr: Or my love of my brain.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Jesus does say to love God with your whole mind.

Brie Stoner: Right.

Richard Rohr: The mind is not diminished. And here's the irony of the whole thing. We became so threatened by rationalism after the enlightenment, or the scientific method, and then

in the strangest and most silly kind of way, we took on our own form of rationalism, to compete with this mind that we hated, and we lost what I would call the contemplative mind, our unique access point. I mean, Biblical fundamentalists, I know this sounds like a contradiction, they're actually rationalists. What I mean by that, they create a little frame inside of which there's a certain kind of logic.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, I lived it.

Richard Rohr: Yeah.

Brie Stoner: It made perfect sense when I was in it.

Richard Rohr: Uh-huh (affirmative). As long as you stay in that frame and don't talk to anybody outside of it, you're actually insisting on reason, not faith, while calling it faith. That's the trap that fundamentalist religion is in. It actually has huge control needs.

Brie Stoner: Oh, yeah.

Richard Rohr: And reason has huge control needs. Faith doesn't. And that's what gives it free access, open access. It isn't preoccupied with controlling the data that's coming in. So, it allows you to be much more patient and kind, frankly. It should, but that's not the religion we have today. Most people do not associate, forgive me, Christians with being patient and kind. They don't, which shows our own kind of very degraded rationalism.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, or even being comfortable being human, that we spend so much time avoiding our messiness, and our faults, and our failures, and our—

Richard Rohr: And disguising them.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, yeah. Which maybe to the first question is part of why I'm having so much difficulty in my thirties, is that I'm coming about full circle into a full acceptance of my humanity maybe even for the first time, and it's very different.

Richard Rohr: And it will never stop. I still feel I'm doing that at seventy-five.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Accepting my humanity, seeing my humanity, and daring to believe that it could be beloved of God. It never stops, yeah.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: Wow.

Paul Swanson: That's good to know that the road ahead is more of the same, in a way. Constant practice.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. I don't think it changes. Just that you get more practiced at trusting it, allowing it, and not needing it to be perfect or right, even by your own criteria.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, "perfect and right," that just springs to mind the frameworks of my own Christian

upbringing, of thinking the how I identify as a Christian was knowing who's in and who's out.

Richard Rohr: Of course.

Paul Swanson: In this journey of more inclusivity, it's been a wonderful unfolding, and I think you've been drawing that roadmap for a lot of folks. And I'm curious. for you, Richard, how did you go into a more inclusive framework where you could dare to say things like, "God loves things by becoming them"?

Richard Rohr: I quote that three times in the book, don't I?

Paul Swanson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Richard Rohr: Or I say that. I don't know if I read it somewhere else. I don't think I did. If I did, forgive me, but I was so proud of myself that I came up with that verse. "God loves things by becoming them."

Brie Stoner: That's a good one.

Richard Rohr: Well, it is a good one, wherever it came from, because I think it's ultimate truth, one that's mirrored already in the Trinity. God the Father—just to use Trinitarian, classic language—God loves the Son by being one with the Son. So, you've got the pattern. The Son loves the Spirit by being one with the Spirit but giving the Spirit. So, it's becoming and giving, becoming and giving, handing over and receiving, endlessly.

I think it was reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity, then moving out from that, reflection on the belief in incarnation, that he loved humanity by becoming humanity, but then pretty much we stopped the cycle there, you know? And we all worshiped, we Christians, the body of Jesus, and we're real happy that Jesus came, or that God came there, into that body, but we were just not ready to expand it, when for me, that's the whole point.

You've heard me talk a lot about moving from the personal to the universal, the concrete to the universal. The first 2,000 years of Christianity, we largely were in awe of the concrete, and I'm going to try to say that in a positive way. I don't think there was any ill will, or it took all of the effort we could to kneel and kiss the ground before the presence in this one little baby in Bethlehem. And we did the same thing with, we Catholics, with the Eucharist, took all of the faith we could to dare to believe that the divine presence was in a piece of bread. So, we worshiped the bread, when even in our own canon law, we said sacramenta pro populus [Latin 00:31:14], "The sacraments are for the sake of the people." They're not an end in themselves, you know? They're for the sake of the transformation of people. But often, they just became the exercises of priests, so we would be in awe of this magical, priestly class, who could bring the divine presence to us. And that's what's falling apart now, thank God, this idolatry of the medium instead of the accessing of the message. You protestants did it with the Bible. We Catholics did it with the church and the priesthood. But it's the same idolatry. It's the same loving the medium instead of the message.

Paul Swanson: Right, right. And, Richard, you've been talking about, previous to this, about how some of the same things you wrestled with in your thirties, you continue to wrestle with now.

Richard Rohr: Oh, yeah.

Paul Swanson: Who do you struggle to include now, as you've grown in this inclusive framework? [laughter] Anything come to mind?

Richard Rohr: Well, yeah. I'm sure if I'd be totally honest, it's people who are like me at my worst: righteous people, judgmental people, overly zealous people, all of which I am, and when I see it in other people, I have a very hard time accepting it—a pharisaical Christian, a righteous Christian—then I transfer that to the political sphere, when a whole group of politicians on our present American political scene can never admit they're wrong, can never even laugh. I mean, there's some of them, I swear, I'm waiting for them once to crack a smile. They can't.

And you know, when you're hiding behind loads of illusion, you don't have time to smile anymore. So, I see through that, because I'm so damn serious, but then I have a hard time loving it and forgiving it in other people. You know, little people, humble people, sincere people like you, no trouble. That takes no effort whatsoever, but give someone who's rigid and righteous, and I just need divine grace to know how to see Christ in them. Yeah, they're a huge blockage.

Brie Stoner: You know, I can almost get to the point where I can fully embrace an incarnational worldview like you're talking about, and I'm so moved by your humility in naming that what bothers you about other people, or what really triggers you, you say is something that you see in yourself.

Richard Rohr: It's my worst self, all the time. Yeah.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, so for me, when you say this beautiful phrase that, "A Christian is one who can recognize Christ in everyone and everything," and I can almost do that, except when it comes to that humiliating mirror toward myself, of my own shit, and shortcomings, and, you know. So, what helps you embrace your own incarnation, I guess?

Richard Rohr: I wonder if it's not a necessary tension, to be the pushback against any glib thought that you are enlightened, converted, saved, loving. I get to see, every day, how I'm not loving. I had Mass this morning at the parish church down on the corner, all dressed up, at 7:00, and there were several people I had a hard time loving, for very judgmental reasons on my side, these people who were the most pious, insist on falling to their knees at communion time, and they're the least involved in the church. They do no service, but when they're there attending a service, they're the most pious of all. I just could not love them.

And I asked, "Okay, Lord, let positive energy flow toward that person," but I think you have to have those kinds of resistances to make that choice to plug into the bigger source. I, Richard—

Brie Stoner: Can't do it.

Richard Rohr: --do not have the grace to love this lady on her humble knees in front of me, receiving on the tongue, and clearly dramatizing to the whole church, that, "I am very authentic," you know? So I judge, in my mind she's inauthentic. I hate that hardness of heart in me, even if it's only momentary. I think that has to happen. I don't know any other way. You keep

relying upon mercy, choosing grace, surrendering to love, unless you see its incapacity in yourself, its non-presence in yourself.

So, that's what you've heard me say years ago. Sin is part of the deal. If we think we're ever going to get rid of it, sin is part of the deal. You've got to not do it to learn what it means to do it right, or to have it be done to you in a better way.

Brie Stoner: That really helps me, Richard, think about one way that I can embrace the Universal Christ, beyond just a concept but in my own life, as embracing my shortcomings, my failures, my moments of, "I can't do it," as an opportunity to rest in something bigger. That's really helpful for me. Thank you.

Richard Rohr: Good. That makes me happy. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: I'm going to continue to work on my plan for perfection. [laughter] Richard, we wanted to close out this conversation by asking you the question, "Where have you seen or experienced Christ this week?"

Richard Rohr: This week?

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: You know, I have to go back maybe, because it's just a few hours ago, to that same Mass this morning. Other people in the church, I was able to deeply respect and love, the flow was natural. It was immediate. It was drawn out of me by their shared goodness. So, I think that's often the way we're drawn into the Christ mystery, where it's pulled out of us by the beauty, the goodness, or the truth of another situation or another person. But how is it a Christ experience, if this makes sense, is when I surrendered to it, allowed the flow to happen, I experienced a leap of joy; whereas, when I resisted it in the lady who had fallen to her knees and received communion on her tongue, I didn't experience a leap of joy.

Now, let me explain. I think when you see Christ, when you're in the flow, you experience what Paul calls, in Galatians, the fruits of the Spirit. The second fruit of the Spirit he lists is joy. Well, I've just got to be selfish and honest about it. When I allow the flow to happen and can see Christ, as I did in some of the people in church this morning, there I felt joy. When I stopped that flow and judged this woman, who might be suffering a great deal, who knows, you know, and her fall to her knees might be entirely authentic, but I had no joy, just a hard heart for a second, a hard, cold heart.

So, I experienced Christ already this morning when I let the flow happen unresistant, and resisted my own judgments, my own analysis, my own positioning, up and down, right and wrong. Once I get into that positioning, I'll always find a way to dismiss people who are, somehow, by my criteria, inferior, inadequate. So you see, I'm just as bad as the supposed Pharisees that I hate so much, but I see that Pharisee-ism in me. When I see Christ in people and do not try to position them up or down, I experience joy. So if joy is the fruit of the Spirit, then I have to trust that is the true seeing. Do you follow me?

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Brie Stoner: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: That's the true seeing, because there was no joy when my heart was hardened, however momentary it was, you know. There were actually several people who were driving me crazy this morning.

Paul Swanson: Two of them are sitting across from you right now.

Brie Stoner: Yeah, for example.

Richard Rohr: For example, these two questioners who will not shut up. [laughter]

[music playing]

Paul Swanson: Just let me get on with my day.

Richard Rohr: Well, thank you very much.

Brie Stoner: Thank you so much.

Paul Swanson: Thank you, Richard.

Richard Rohr: You're welcome.

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