

Devotion, Seventh Week of Eastertide, 2023
Rev. Jeanne Simpson

I recently finished reading “The Secret Chord” by Geraldine Brooks. Her books are incredible – “March,” about the character of Louisa May Alcott’s father in “Little Women”; “People of the Book” about an ancient Haggadah, an ancient Jewish manuscript; “Caleb’s Crossing” about a man who became the first Native American graduate of Harvard College in 1665; and her newest, “Horse” about Lexington, the winningest race horse in history. I haven’t read “Year of Wonders” about the medieval bubonic plague, but I will soon. All of her books take something from history and expand it into an incredible novel.

“The Secret Chord” is about King David. Brooks weaves in sections of the Biblical text with fictionalized story about those events. I had forgotten about some of these events in David’s life, contained in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel in the Old Testament. David was an incredible singer and harp player, and he wrote a number of the Psalms, as well as music that we no longer have available to us. Brooks brings this incredible man to life, with all his beauty, bravery, and foibles. What is most remarkable about his story is that the Bible presents him with all his flaws. He is not a sugar-coated character who always obeys God. He does some pretty terrible things, and he and his family suffer for them. None of his children other than Solomon rise to greatness, and most of them are pretty horrible people, quite frankly. And yet – God loves this man who pours his heart out in the Psalms. David praises God, argues with God, complains about his treatment, begs for forgiveness and physical healing, and searches for God when he feels the absence of the one he loves more than any other. David’s Psalms reflect a true love story with the Creator.

So pick up this book or others by Geraldine Brooks, and enjoy some enthralling summer reading.

Jeanne