YESTERDAY

Inspired by The Beatles' Song
Week #4 of a 5-Week "Songs of Life" Series
Rev. Richard Maraj
Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026

LYRICS

Yesterday
All my troubles seemed so far away
Now it looks as though they're here to stay
Oh, I believe in yesterday

Suddenly
I'm not half the man I used to be
There's a shadow hangin' over me
Oh, yesterday came suddenly

Why she had to go
I don't know, she wouldn't say
I said something wrong
Now I long for yesterday

Yesterday
Love was such an easy game to play
Now I need a place to hide away
Oh, I believe in yesterday

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MESSAGE

So how many people have ever said something unkind to someone you really love and you regretted it immediately? Anybody? How many people have ever made a mistake, and messed up big time, and you wish you could do it over again? And how many people have had so many problems or difficulties or things going wrong you just felt overwhelmed?

You know, one of my favorite characters is Charlie Brown. And even though everything always goes wrong -- he always ends up on the short end of the stick -- I just think there's something really cool about him. Here's a Peanuts cartoon I saw. He was lying in bed, and he said this: *"Sometimes I lie awake at night and ask, where have I gone wrong? And a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night, Charlie Brown.'" [Congregants laugh]*

So, we are in Week #4 of our five-week fall version series of the "Songs of Life," where I take a familiar favorite hit song and extract a spiritual message from it. The theme is one-word songs. And Week #1 was "Honesty" by Billy Joel. Week #2 was "Imagine" by John Lennon. Last week was Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful."

Today we are doing “Yesterday” from the Beatles' 1965 album, “Help.” And this is a sad-sounding song; this is a melancholic ballad written by Paul McCartney about longing for the past; longing for a time that was better after a sudden loss; after feeling some deep regret; after being overwhelmed by his troubles.

You know, most of us, when we listen to it, it seems clearly this is a love song. This is a song about a relationship. But McCartney suggested that the specific lyric, *“I said something wrong,”* was actually a memory from his childhood. That he mocked his mother in the way that she was talking and saying, *“You're trying to sound so posh.”* And she got embarrassed. And then Paul saw how embarrassed she was, and he became embarrassed that he embarrassed her.

And so, Paul's mom died when he was 14 years old, and he wrote this song 10 years later. So, you could see that some of that pain in him was still there, and you can feel that in the emotion of the song.

Some interesting facts: the music to the song actually came to Paul in a dream. He actually woke up from a dream, and just like he was taking dictation, it flowed through. This song was voted the Best Song of the 20th Century. It is the song that is most recorded by other artists than any other song. It's been covered over 2,200 times. And, of course, it was number one.

And so, the interesting thing about this song, as well: it is the only song by the Beatles where there's only one voice. He was the only voice on that song. And the other thing is that Paul and John, when they wrote together, they would often, you know, have the music, but the words weren't falling into place. They would just put filler words, just placeholder words. And this song didn't have a title, so the filler was called “Scrambled Eggs.” And the first verse was:

Scrambled Eggs
Oh my baby, how I love your legs.
Not as much as I like scrambled eggs.

And so, you know, this song -- yeah, it is sad. And this song is heartfelt and it's heartbreaking. I mean, it is a powerful emotional song. And I think we can all relate to it, because everyone has experienced loss. Everyone has experienced regret. Every one of us have troubles. Every one of us, you know, has longed for a time that was better than the current one that we were going through and experiencing.

So, this morning, we're going to look at three spiritual messages -- three life lessons from the song, “Yesterday.”

The first one, we're going to look at: **LONGING FOR YESTERDAY**. What longing for yesterday means. You know, it says:

Yesterday
All my troubles seemed so far away …
Oh, how I long for yesterday …
How I believe in yesterday

You know, yesterday is not just the day before today. Yesterday is actually, in this song, I believe, a metaphor of a time when things were better. You know, the song begins with the idea that yesterday, everything seemed better. It was lighter, it was easier, it was simpler, it was happier, and he could depend on love. Yesterday represents a time that made sense to him. A time where he was in the flow and he was more confident.

You know, sometimes we think that we are really longing for yesterday, but what we're really longing for is what yesterday represents. We’re longing for love. We're longing for security. We're longing for happiness. We're longing for the belief of knowing everything's going to be all right. And perhaps even longing for a deeper connection with ourselves or a connection with others or a connection to God.

What if yesterday really isn't about the past? What if yesterday represents the life we wished we were living right now? What if the happiness we remember from yesterday is reminding us of the happiness we could be creating today?

I think we all have some personal version of our yesterday. And so, what does yesterday stand for for you? What does yesterday mean to you?

When we say, *"I wish I could get back to yesterday,"* what are we really saying? What are we really yearning for? I mean, it could be peace. It could be love. It could be a sense of purpose. It could be a deeper spiritual connection. It could be joy and laughter and playfulness, freedom and adventure.

For some of us, when we think of yesterday, we think, *"Oh, the good old days."* Or the people that we love. Maybe our first love. Or maybe the first adventures we had, or the fun times, or the places we visited; the dreams that we fulfilled; the moments that we shared when life was happier and simpler.

And let's go a little deeper with this idea of yesterday. You know, longing for yesterday, to me, represents the desire we all have in ourselves for a better life. That represents the creative power and ability to make a better life, to make a better day. You know, our innate desire manifests itself through asking, seeking, and knocking. As we ask, we will receive. As we seek, we shall find. As we knock, the door will be opened unto us.

And every one of us has spiritual faculties of hope, of faith, of prayer; of the spoken word or thought; our vision and our intention. You know, we know that life can and will get better. We have the power to create and overcome and heal. Yesterday is not about wanting the same thing, but a new version of what that thing would be in our minds and in our lives.

And so, I ask you: What are you longing for? And what is the yesterday feel like, and how would that live like for you to have that again today?

And the second one is to **ACCEPT THE LOSSES AND CHANGES OF LIFE**. And so, he kind of lists all the things that aren't kind of going as well as he'd like. It says:

> **Yesterday all my troubles seemed so far away.**
> **Now it looks as if they're here to stay …**
> **Suddenly I'm not half the man I used to be.**
> **There's a shadow hanging over me …**
> **I said something wrong …**
> **Now I need a place to hide away …**

Clearly, he's kind of struggling and fighting and resisting all the things in his life that doesn't seem to be going well. He's lamenting over all the things that have gone. And he's feeling like his life's kind of falling apart.

And so, my question for you is: How do you react when you're experiencing loss? How do you react when you experience regret or dealing with problems and changes?

One of the reasons yesterday touches us so deeply is because we do all experience change. We do all experience loss. We all have had something happen, something change, something that is no longer the way it used to be. The singer is just struggling with the fact that his reality is different now. He wishes that he could just return to those simpler days.

One of the greatest challenges for us as human beings is we want our lives to change, but we don't always accept the things that are a part of that change. We all want to have a life that's long and rich and successful and prosperous, but we don't want to get old. Or we want to create new experiences, but we just like everything to stay the same.

The key to life -- being happy -- is to learn to accept life as it is, and our situations and ourselves as we are in those moments. Not that we can't improve, but it's to find peace and stop fighting, stop resisting,

and just find peace with how life is right here and now. And we need to accept because the reality is relationships change. People leave. Loved ones pass away. Opportunities disappear. Circumstances shift, and sometimes without any warning.

You know, acceptance is not giving up on life. Acceptance is giving up on the fighting and the resistance and the struggle towards what has already happened and, instead, to use that energy to create something better in our lives.

You know, the singer in this song -- it's a lost relationship -- wonders what he said. He wonders what he did that caused this, and he's carrying this guilt. He's carrying this regret. He's carrying the ideas of questioning himself and his actions. And he's really struggling to accept this new reality or that possibility that he messed up and lost a relationship.

He wants to go back to that time, but he hasn't made peace yet. He hasn't fully accepted what has happened. He's blaming himself. And the only way he could move forward and make peace is to forgive himself.

You know, much of the sufferings of human beings comes from resisting what has already happened and wishing life was different than it is. So, what would you like in your life to be different? And what in your life do you need to make peace with and find total acceptance?

I found an interesting article about a Japanese tradition called Kintsugi. And it's: a piece of pottery breaks. And rather than throwing it away or trying to hide the cracks, they take the broken pieces and mix it in with some gold and then, you know, put it on. And it's obvious that it's got, you know, some damage to it. But the thing about it is, they see that it's not ruined. In fact, it adds beauty to it. It adds history to it. That, even with the brokenness, when it's accepted and when it's utilized, it can bring even greater value, greater strength, and greater beauty.

And from a spiritual perspective, we all have cracks. We have all been hurt. We've all been disappointed. We've all made mistakes. We've all experienced losses. But those losses and experience and hurts do not make us less valuable. In fact, it kind of makes us more valuable, more experienced, more aware, more compassionate. You know, our wounds can become places of acceptance. And where the cracks are are points of strength, points of beauty, and points of value.

Acceptance, when you think about it, really adds to the value of everything. Acceptance of ourselves adds to the value of who we are. Acceptance of everything in our lives adds to the value of our experiences of life. Acceptance of yesterday adds to the value of yesterday. And acceptance of today also adds to the value of today.

An important part of this message is acceptance of the losses. Acceptance of the changes in our lives. And even the acceptance of the mistakes that we make that we sometimes regret.

And then the last one is to **LEARN FROM YESTERDAY TO HELP US LIVES A BETTER TODAY.** You know, we can't go back and relive life, but we can change how we carry the meaning of what yesterday has for us. You know, again, we can't go back; we can't change it. But we can use yesterday to become a better person -- to be more loving; to be more spiritually awakened,

Instead of wishing that we could return to yesterday or the past, we could ask ourselves a question: What can I learn from yesterday? Who do I need to forgive? What do I need to release? What blessings am I overlooking and taking for granted in my life right now? How can I make today more meaningful than yesterday?

Yesterday really also reminds us that we're all human beings, but we're also spiritual beings. We're mental beings; we're emotional beings; we're social beings. And we go through all kinds of experience as a part of life. You know, we love. We laugh. We cry. We win. We lose. We make mistakes. We triumph and overcome in so many wonderful ways. We feel peace and happiness. We feel heartbreak.

And we have times where we all wish that life was a little bit different than it currently is. Our spiritual journey isn't to live in the past or live in yesterday, but it is to learn from it and to make peace with it and to extract the value that those things have in our lives.

The Apostle Paul in Philippians 3, 13-14 says, *"Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal."* Paul is not suggesting we erase what is behind or erase the memories. He's actually teaching us to not allow the past to prevent us from moving forward.

I mean, is there anything in your life that is holding you back from moving forward? From making progress? From creating something better and more positive?

You know, somebody once said, *"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift. That's why it's called the present."*

A police officer pulls up to a car that was speeding, and the officer walks up and says to the driver, *"Do you know you were speeding?"*

The driver said, *"No, officer; I did not realize that."*

From the passenger seat, his wife said, *"Oh, honey, you've been going over the speed limit for quite a while. I told you you were several miles ago."*

The driver snaps at his wife and says, *"Just be quiet."*

And then the officer notices the expiration registration sticker and adds, *"I'm going to have to write you up on your tags."*

And the driver says, *"Oh, I had no idea."*

And the wife says, *"Oh, you knew. I have been reminding you to renew for the last two months."*

And the driver says to his wife, *"Shut up!"*

And the officer looks at the passenger seat and asks the wife, *"Ma'am, does he always talk to you like this?"*

And she shrugs and says, *"Oh, no, officer. He only talks like this when he's been drinking." [Congregants laugh]* All right.

We cannot go back and change yesterday, but we can use yesterday as a reminder to the great possibilities we have for our lives today and right now. And so, these are the three messages: Number one is: when you find yourself longing for yesterday, ask yourself what you're really longing for. Ask yourself what you're seeking or what you're really needing. And whether it's peace or love or healing or whatever it may be, be clear about what you want and be willing to help give yourself those things.

Second: when you find yourself struggling with yesterday, learn to find acceptance for all that happens. Stop fighting. Stop resisting. Stop beating yourself up and wishing life was different than it is, and make peace with it now so you can free up that energy to create something better in your life.

And finally: when you think about yesterday, remember that yesterday is a classroom, and it is not a prison. Take the lesson, take the wisdom, take the love, and use that energy and those gifts to create a more abundant life today.

And those are the lessons from the song, "Yesterday." God bless you all.

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