



Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith

By Barbara Brown Taylor

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“This beautiful book is rich with wit and humanness and honesty and loving detail....I cannot overstate how liberating and transforming I have found Leaving Church to be.” —Frederick Buechner, author of *Beyond Words*

“This is an astonishing book. . . . Taylor is a better writer than LaMott and a better theologian than Norris. In a word, she is the best there is.” —*Living Church*

Barbara Brown Taylor, once hailed as one of America’s most effective and beloved preachers, eloquently tells the moving and delightful story of her search to find an authentic way of being Christian—even when it meant giving up her pulpit.

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Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith By Barbara Brown Taylor Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. A widely acclaimed preacher, Taylor draws on her homiletical skills in this finely crafted memoir with a simple plot: an Episcopal priest exhausts her inner resources, first in an urban church and then in a small country parish; she changes jobs, struggles and finds renewal. Such a synopsis, however, does not do justice to Taylor's literary style in this rich evocation of her lifelong love affair with God. "When I think of my first cathedral," she writes, "I am back in a field behind my parents' house in Kansas, with every stalk of prairie grass lit up from within." Drawn to the church, she compulsively overworks: "I had such a strong instinct for rescue that my breasts fairly leaked when I came across those in need of rescuing." Though she has found new employment, she realizes she is still a priest: "I miss being a lightning rod, conducting all that heat and light not only from heaven to earth but also from person to person." Current and former clergy will relate to her comical and sometimes touching descriptions of parish life, while memoir buffs will savor her journey as she identifies her core beliefs, sets boundaries and learns to relish her "blessed swath" of the world. (May)

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From [Booklist](#)

Episcopal priest Taylor, a respected and beloved preacher, ended a 20-year career when, after much reflection, she left the church. She had expected to spend the rest of her life writing sermons and leading worship. Instead, she now teaches full time at a college in Georgia. With its three indicatively titled sections--"Finding," "Losing," "Keeping"--*Leaving Church* aims to explain her compulsion to leave the familiar behind. When she was first ordained and for years thereafter, she felt certain about the fundamentals of her own faith and what it meant to be Christian. But she slowly realized that she was conflicted, internally and with the church, in large part because of church-inclusiveness controversies, including gay and lesbian issues. She laments that while ostensibly protecting the integrity of scripture and church doctrine, people can trample the rights of others. She discovered that change isn't easy. Sometimes, even getting dressed in the morning seems an insurmountable challenge. Ultimately, Taylor's is a luminous portrait of faith not lost but questioned, refound, and regained. *June Sawyers*

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Review

"I cannot overstate how liberating and transforming I have found *Leaving Church* to be." (Frederick Buechner, author of *Beyond Words*)

"This memoir [...] is full of surprises[...] In her renewal is our own." (Peter J. Gomes, Harvard University)

"Taylor describes doubt, faith and vocation, their limits, and how the church both blesses and muddies the waters." (Nora Gallagher, author of *Practicing Resurrection*)

"A fiercely honest and gracious book about our primary vocation to be human." (Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and author of *Reimagining Christianity*)

"*Leaving Church* is a canticle of praise to creator and creation." (Thomas Lynch, author of *The Undertaking and Booking Passage*)

"A finely crafted memoir . . . a rich evocation of her lifelong love affair with God." (*Publishers Weekly*)

(starred review))

“Told with insight, humor and compassion.” (The Columbus Post Dispatch)

“A beautifully crafted memoir There is a refreshing honesty . . . a slice of courage in a world that too often refuses to admit its vulnerability. . . . Leaving Church does not bash the church. It is a love story about letting go and learning to live with the mystery of what may happen next.” (*San Diego Tribune*)

“...Taylor at her best, writing about congregational moments with such artistic grace and wit that we see them afresh” (Christian Century)

“Even without the collar, Barbara Brown Taylor is one of our most important spiritual writers today.” (ExploreFaith)

“I love this book Her beautiful, absorbing memoir will bless countless readers...” (Lauren Winner, The Dallas Morning News)

“Such is the power of Brown Taylor’s prose...and her humanity that this story becomes one of hope.” (Columbus Dispatch)

“An Episcopal priest renowned for her eloquent sermons turns her talents to memoir...” (Atlanta Journal Constitution)

“Lovely . . . revealing . . . poignant. . . . I found in Taylor’s narrative a companionable voice...” (Garret Keizer in Books & Culture)

“A wonderfully gifted Christian writer and speaker.” (Kansas City Star)

“This new memoir is among the summer’s best books...” (Detroit Free Press)

“Taylor is a better writer than LaMott and a better theologian than Norris. ...she is the best there is.” (Living Church)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tina Brookins:

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James Fulk:

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