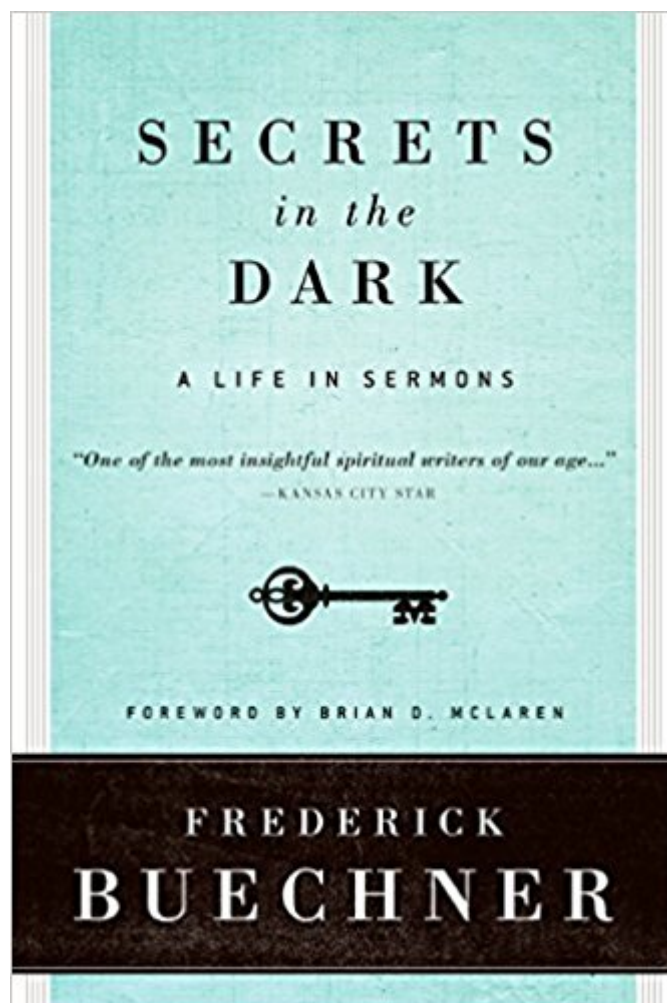


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Secrets In The Dark: A Life In Sermons



Synopsis

Frederick Buechner has long been a kindred spirit to those who find elements of doubt as constant companions on their journey of faith. He is a passionate writer and preacher who can alter lives with a simple phrase. Buechner's words, both written and spoken, have the power to revolutionize and revitalize belief and faith. He reveals the presence of God in the midst of daily life. He faces and embraces difficult questions and doubt as essential components of our lives, rather than as enemies that destroy us. "Listen to your life!" is his clarion call. This theme pervades this definitive collection of sermons, delivered throughout Buechner's lifetime. Presented chronologically, they provide a clear picture of the development of his theology and thinking. Reflecting Buechner's exquisite gift for storytelling and his compassionate pastor's heart, *Secrets in the Dark* will inspire laughter, hope, and bring great solace. Turn the pages and rediscover what it means to be thoughtful about faith. See why this renowned writer has been quoted in countless pulpits and beloved by Americans for generations.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Novelist and Christian writer Buechner (Brendan; *The Alphabet of Grace*) delivered a number of memorable sermons in more than four decades of service as a Presbyterian minister. This collection contains 37 of them, all featuring the intricate stories, fascinating connections and personal touches that are Buechner's signature. By presenting them chronologically, the evolution of his favorite themes of listening to your dreams, finding your calling and the importance of home

are evident. Most touching are the sermons directed at youthful audiences (Buechner was a chaplain at two private boys' schools), such as "The Calling of Voices," in which he pleads with young people to pay attention to the deep gladness in their lives, following it to their life's vocation. For instruction on how to read the Bible, readers should turn to "Love," which recommends that the rule of love, found in the "great commandment" (Matthew 22:36-40), be used as a guide for biblical interpretation and perspective. In "Faith and Fiction," Buechner considers what it means to be a saint—not one who necessarily lives an exemplary life, but who is a "life-giver." Many of these sermons have been published elsewhere, but bound together, they become an elegant and life-giving memoir. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Buechner uses words with such transformative power that any comment on them is like the moon palely reflecting the sun." (Walter Brueggemann, author of *The Prophetic Imagination*) "An elegant and life-giving memoir." (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) "Buechner is one of our best workers of words. Now, in this fine collection, we've got the best of Buechner." (William H. Willimon, Bishop, North Alabama Conference, The United Methodist Church, author of *Sinning Like a Christian*) "The topography of Buechner's world is beautifully mapped by this set of self-revealing sermons and essays." (J. I. Packer, author of *Knowing God*) "Brilliant—overflowing with images and questions and honesty and insights that will haunt you for days." (Rob Bell, pastor of Mars Hill, author of *Velvet Elvis*) "A poignant, practical, deeply philosophical, and powerful work. Highly recommended." (Library Journal) "...his work is a revelation...Here Buechner's storytelling abilities and eye for detail are at their best." (The Lutheran) "[Buechner] eloquently explores the beauty of language, the joy and pain of being human...and the hope of the Gospel." (Dallas Morning News) "One of the most insightful spiritual writers of our age... - a must for Buechner's many fans." (Kansas City Star) "[A book] that will inspire or challenge you." (Chicago Sun Times) "Buechner eloquently explores the beauty of language, the joy and pain of being human, and the hope of the Gospel." (Houston Chronicle) "He has the rare gift of taking biblical text and helping us to see it [...] in a completely new way." (Lexington Herald Leader) "This collection of sermons will refresh your soul. I highly recommend this book for your enjoyment and inspiration." (Canadian Mennonite)

One of the best collections of sermons I've ever read. This book has helped recontextualize my Christianity in a much-needed way. I love Buechner's ability to press into the mysterious and difficult nature of life to address the need for a relationship with God rather than prescribing a list of behavior modifications like pastors and theologians so often do. Can't recommend enough.

This is the first book I've read by Buechner, and I'm so happy to have found him. He speaks of faith issues not from "on high," although he's been an ordained minister for over fifty years, but as one of us who struggle with doubt and how we "...must learn to ignore the voice of the skeptic in all of us and go on praying in spite of it." (XV) He wants us to really listen as the Bible is being read on Sunday morning because "there is no telling what you might hear." The same is true of this book as the author talks about characters like Jacob, St. Paul, Doubting Thomas, and others. I underlined many of the parts of this book and had to set it down to think many times, often teary-eyed. He believes God speaks to us more often than we realize and that we have to be careful with our lives because they matter enormously. He wants us not to settle for "niceness" and "busyness," but holiness. He has a whole chapter on Love and I particularly enjoyed the chapter, "The Clown in the Belfry" and how "If the Lord is indeed our shepherd, then everything goes topsy-turvey." Other chapters include "The Truth of Stories" (He was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award), "Growing up," and "Paul Sends His Love." All teachers should read "Adolescence and the Stewardship of Pain." His lovely prose will reach deep within your heart, and I can't wait to not only re-read this book, but get started on his others. Thank you, Frederick Buechner.

This author helps us to see the Divine all around us, but his approach is for those of us who live with many unanswered questions. I think it is not for those who embrace the absolute answers of fundamentalism. He writes beautifully, honestly and compellingly. I find myself underlining passages and rereading them often.

Very stimulating, enlightening, provocative!

Frederick Buechner is one of my favorite religious thinkers. His deep understanding as a Christian minister and his extraordinary gift for writing, make these series of sermons a high pleasure to read. For fans of Buechner, reading these sermons will well remind you what draws to this influential minister of the faith. For the unacquainted, these collected sermons are an excellent introduction to

Frederick Buechner. I am so pleased with this book!

This book was given to me as a gift on a first lunch meeting, and I'm very grateful. Buechner expresses the joy of a close relationship with God, without doctrine or dogma but just simple stories about unique, everyday experiences. The messages stay with you long after you've closed the book. Each chapter is profound and stand-alone, so I keep it close by so I can read a chapter when I need to remember what life is all about.

Buechner is one of my favorite theological (and human!) minds of the 20th century. This book of sermons provides quick, honest, and authentic insights into the man.

Upon reading this collection for the fourth time and having given it as a gift the same number of times, I was encouraged and challenged and surprised all over again. Buechner's rhythm has become familiar to those of us who read him over and over, but his words are always new. If you don't have this volume, you need it. And if you haven't gifted it yet, you should.

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