

Acts 16:16-34

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Teach us your way

AND WE WILL WALK IN YOUR TRUTH

Somewhere I read: He or she that's greatest among you will be your servant, and if you're servant, you have to be bold. You're going to have to take a risk, you have to pay a cost, you're going to have to cut against the grain. It's not going to be fun, but there'll be joy in that kind of struggle...

Cornell West

What if Christianity and all religious practice became illegal in this country? A far-fetched idea but it's not unheard of in our world, China being the example that first comes to mind, so let's imagine. All the churches/temples/mosques/synagogues closed. All clergy banned from clergy-ness. I'd probably try to work in a wine shop or a bike shop or maybe flipping burgers at shake shack.

We'd have to go underground, incognito so to speak. It seems easy enough to imagine that you and I could continue to have our own spiritual lives at home. But what about community? What if we wanted to have communion together, to be church together?

We'd have to find ways to sneak around meeting in people's houses. This would not be too bad necessarily....I've been to many of your houses and they are great spaces.

But a decision would have to be made to take some risks in order to hold ourselves close to Christ and to our friends in Christ by gathering behind closed doors to worship and pray and study and sing and break bread together. The question would need to be asked--Would we conspire to do this at the risk of arrest and torture and imprisonment and death? And if the answer was yes, the question then becomes why?

And I would think that once this question of why is sufficiently pondered, we would all find our way to a certainty that the Gospel of Christ, in all its transformative and liberating and life giving depth and beauty, is essential to our personal sense of meaning and sanity, and essential to humanity's thriving, humanity's future well-being. That without this Gospel we and all humanity would be hopelessly and helplessly shrouded in darkness, in collective insanity.

So we would make significant plans and efforts to find ways to be church together, to keep the candle burning so to speak. To see ourselves as keepers of the light that no darkness can extinguish. I can imagine that there would be an intensity, an urgency in our little gatherings because in gathering we would be pushing against our fears related to safety. But the urgency and necessity of loving and cherishing Christ and the Gospel in a culture that had become a spiritual desert, a spiritual wasteland, would compel us.

Wow. How nice that we don't have to worry about any of this. How nice that I don't have to flip burgers at shake shack. How nice that we have been able to gather in this space for 44 years, openly welcome all to join us, light candles, break bread, and drink freely and deeply of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Given how safe it is to be church in this country, the question arises, do we appreciate it enough? Do we cherish it enough? Are we taking full advantage of how safe it is to be church in this country? What would Paul be doing with all this freedom?

Paul and his friend Silas and perhaps a few unnamed others in the background of our text today are so remarkable for how dismissive of personal safety issues they are in their single-minded devotion to sharing the Gospel, living the Gospel, in-fleshing the Gospel in hostile territory. To be THAT committed to teaching and living out the love of Jesus Christ is astonishing.

I count my blessings every day that I don't have to be that committed, committed at the risk of personal safety. But because my safety is not at risk, shouldn't I be that committed and more?

Ouch. It's a haunting question finding its way to my heart from Paul's jail cell. Maybe to your heart too?

Shouldn't I be, shouldn't we be, that committed and more?

Are we taking full advantage of our freedom to live the Gospel? We are among the most fortunate of Christians in this world and in history to be able to ask this question as a church.

We've been able to ask it for 44 years now, and we've done some wonderful things for Jesus' sake. But let's keep asking as we head into year 45 and beyond. Let's you and I dare to keep asking and dare to hold our selves open to the answers the Spirit will surely provide us

HE IS RISEN!

NORTH OAK CHRISTIAN CHURCH-DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

June 2, 2019

In Jesus' Name, Greetings!

Music for Gathering

Resurrection Bells

O feed us this day Holy Spirit

WITH THE FRAGRANCE OF THE FIELDS AND THE FRESHNESS OF THE OCEANS

Help us to hear and to hold in all dearness those exacting and wonderful
words of our Lord Jesus, saying

FOLLOW ME

Lighting of the Candles

“My work is loving the world.” Mary Oliver

5 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

We Welcome One Another as Christ

Piano/Melodica Solo Jeff Nunn

The Morning Prayer and Musical Response

Silence

“Let us continue to hear, little by little by little, the voices...” Mary Oliver

Children's Circle

All children thru 5th grade are welcome to come forward. A small outreach offering will be collected for our money jar. Following this time of sharing and prayer, children may attend their very own

“Worship and Wonder” time together in our classroom annex. Child care is offered for infants and toddlers but they are also welcome in the sanctuary.

Prayer for Illumination

Living Word, do not keep silence

TEACH US TO WALK IN THE LIGHT, AMEN.

THE LESSON ACTS 16: 16-34

The Meditation “Dare to Keep Asking” Rev. Rob Carr

To Thee we call, who art God alone. The one who is exceedingly great, the Unutterable One, the Incomprehensible One, to whom all powers of government are subject, before whom every authority bows, and before whom all that is high falls down and remains silent, at whose voice the demons take flight, and beholding whom all creation surrenders in silent adoration. Amen.

Silent and spoken personal prayers of thanksgiving confession, intercession

The Offering

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.
As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

8o My Shepherd You Supply My Need

Welcome to the Table

The breaking of bread at Holy Communion can break you right open
Everything you have ever loved comes tumbling out
TO BE MISSED AND PRAISED AND MOURNED AND LOVED SOME MORE

It's like being known all the way down
IT'S LIKE BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

One moment you see him
AND THE NEXT YOU DO NOT

One moment your eyes are opened and you recognize the Risen Christ
AND THE NEXT HE VANISHES FROM YOUR SIGHT

Take heart, this is no ghost. Do not fear. You cannot lose him for good
THIS IS THE PLACE HE HAS PROMISED TO BE

AND THIS IS THE PLACE HE RETURNS TO MEET US AGAIN AND AGAIN
RISEN LORD, BE KNOWN TO US IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Words of Institution

The Communion Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen.

Following the Lord's Prayer, please come forward by rows to receive the loaf and the cup.

The cup is non-alcoholic by choice of the congregation

Gluten free crackers are available on the table for those who prefer this option

Children also celebrate communion weekly as part of "Worship and Wonder"

112 Holy Ground 2X

Create your reign of unity now Gracious God

THROUGH OUR FIREY HEARTS AND WILLING HANDS, AMEN

TO OUR GUESTS----WELCOME!

SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD AND GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE

WE WALK HUMBLY, LOVE DEEPLY, LIVE SIMPLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY

We are delighted to include you today. Your presence and participation is a gift to us all. We hope you experience among us the warm spirit of our family of faith and the gracious touch of Christ upon your life. Refreshments and welcoming conversation are available after worship in the Community Room just down the hall. More information about NOCC and the Disciples of Christ is available via

Facebook and these websites

www.nocckc.org www.kcdisciples.org www.disciples.org

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

THIS WEEK

Today 1145AM All Church Picnic
Monday 6PM Troop 900
Monday 6-9PM Visitation for Curtis O'Rear Family/Friends
Monday 630PM NOCC Elders
Tuesday 945AM Men's Bible Group
Tuesday 6PM Pack 900
Tuesday 7PM Women's Bible Group

KCMO MAYORAL FORUM AT NORTHLAND CATHEDRAL
SATURDAY 12NOON

UPCOMING

WELCOME

GREATER KANSAS CITY DISCIPLES WOMEN'S MINISTRY TO NOCC

On June 27, Disciples women from our area will be gathering beginning at 6PM (check in) for a dinner and program beginning at 630PM.

The keynote speaker is Dawn R Steiner, MD, Medical Director for UHWC (University of Health Women's Care) in Lee's Summit. Dr. Steiner is board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and also certified in daVinci robotic surgery. Sounds like this could be interesting!! All ladies and gents are welcome to attend! Looking for NOCC volunteers to help with hosting the "dining experience" and hope you'll stay for the program too!

Great food, music, and wonderful fellowship with our area Disciples!!

Contact Debbie Herrick for more information!

CHERITH BROOK SEEKING ITEMS

such as small men's and women's undies, sugar, razors, bike locks, gauze pads and medical tape, for their friends experiencing homelessness.