# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## A Love Story (Wine, Water and Song)

According to the writer of John's Gospel, the first miracle Jesus did was to turn ordinary water into wine. I have read this story many times. Often while preparing to officiate a wedding when I will reference it as an illustration of God's interest in weddings. In this story, marriage is used as a metaphor for the relationship between Jesus and the church. Jesus is the bridegroom and the church is His bride.

Some translators use this story to emphasize that following Jesus has rewards beyond the spiritual. After all, Jesus dealt with the most basic of human needs from water to food to clothing. Practical, everyday needs. The idea that the first

recorded miracle performed by Jesus was the equivalent of a run to the party store to ensure the party did not end early leaves a lot of room for creative speculation.



Was this first miracle a warm-up act or perhaps foreshadowing? Welcome to week one of our new series, Freedom. Hopefully, the neighbors fireworks stash will soon be as empty as the wine jugs were in Cana on the night of that

of that first miracle. Our dog, Duke,, could use a rest from the every night explosions of firecrackers and rockets.

#### Democracy

It is a tradition in this country to celebrate our freedom on the 4th of July. A freedom based on a form of government that we call democracy.

Reinhold Niebuhr, in The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, writes "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." I suspect that the framers of our Constitution believed this to be true. And a great experiment began that we call democracy taking shape around this idea of freedom with justice. Page 2



a seat belt at times. I remember when laws first went into effect mandating

was pro-individual liberties. Whatever my sentiment was at the tine. I don't take a stand on whether seat belts infringe on my civil liberties.

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Please wear a

mask while in the area and to enter church office...If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

Thank you & Be Safe Everyone!

## Restoring Justice (Do it for you and us)

With new cases of COVID rising across the country and enough people refusing to wear masks to draw media. attention, it's hard to focus on other subjects. One coping mechanism that comes highly recommended by experts is to limit our consumption of news. And I do this to a point, but it's hard to ignore a world going through so much pain.

One news source, the Business Insider, refers to the number of people protesting mandates to wear face masks as a small but vocal minority. While I find this encouraging, I continue to see people around me not wearing face masks. I seldom speak up on the pro-face seat belts. I'm pretty sure I mask side, frankly, because I don't like wearing a face mask. I wear a face mask because I care more about other people's wellbeing than my own discomfort. What about you?

I also don't like wearing

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## Restoring Justice (Do it for you and us ) ... cont from page 1

I buckle up. Admittedly, I occasionally express some minor annoyance when I'm backing my truck up to connect a trailer, and a warning bell starts blaring. Seat belts save lives, and they are mandated by law. So I comply because I believe that it is the right thing to do.

But unlike car accidents, the coronavirus is supposed to be temporary. I never believed Trump's predictions that the virus would suddenly go away. I look at the numbers almost every day. And not that long ago, our numbers were decreasing. The virus was going away. And I attribute our progress to the cooperation of the vast majority of us taking social distancing seriously. This includes wearing face masks.

But there is another disease that ravaged our country from its beginning. A disease that is also a global pandemic. This disease is racism. And like the COVID virus, which flourishes when cooperation diminishes, racism found a way to wreak havoc with all aspects of our life. Diseases are hard to treat when you don't know you have it. Sometimes the symptoms are subtle. But the pandemic, coupled with blatantly racist leaders,

brought racism to our collective consciousness.

#### An illustration

Indulge me for a short lesson on numbers. Suppose there are 1,000 rocks in a wagon. And 100 of us are asked to choose a rock of our preference. Out of the thousand rocks, one hundred are round, and the other 900 are flat. After we each take out the rock of our choice, we count the round and flat rocks. And we discover that 60 flat rocks and 40 round rocks were removed from the wagon.

Do you conclude that round rocks or flat rocks are the preferred choices? While it is true that there were ten more flat rocks taken than round rocks, round rocks make up only 10% of the original total. Yet our group chose round rocks 40% of the time. In other words, round rocks are chosen substantially more often than flat rocks.

If you have any confusion about this illusion, please reread the paragraphs. If you are still confused, find someone who can explain this conclusion. Someone also needs to explain this to our

# A Love Story (Wine, Water & Song)....cont. from page 1

Democracy is said to be government by the people — for the people. Our version of democracy is a representative democracy. We elect people to represent us in the governing process, and if they fail to do what they promised — or prove to be incompetent — we elect someone different during the next election.

We don't all agree on what it means to be free. For some, freedom is personal choice. Walking into a building without a face mask, or ordering a fast food burger without the onions. For some, freedom is wearing a sidearm into a Walmart.

But freedom does not mean that we get to do anything that pleases us. We form a democracy for this reason. The people collectively decide on laws that help us to live together — as we pursue life, liberty, and happiness.

And as we debate how to structure and enforce laws and policies that make it possible for each one of us to experience individual freedom, we insist that all voices are heard — that each person is given an opportunity to vote and that the rights of all persons are protected.

Freedom in a democracy is not intended

political leaders and anyone else who argue that white people suffer more injustice than people of color. Like the number of new coronavirus cases, the numbers tell a disheartening reality that doesn't change by hiding the numbers from public view.

### A tooth for a tooth

The evidence supports that wearing seat belts and face masks save lives. Evidence also supports that finding ways to reduce racial bias saves lives. But unlike wearing a face mask that reduces the amount of potentially

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to be only for the wealthy — or the powerful — or any particular group of people. We expect our government to create and enforce laws and policies that preserve freedom for all — regardless of their skin color, their gender — regardless of where their ancestors lived in the past — regardless of the style of clothes they choose to wear — regardless of who they love.

And, I would argue, that a democracy depends on a mutuality that only exists when love is the building block. Freedom, itself, requires a choice to love or not to love others. But can we govern ourselves, democratically, in the absence of love for one another as a foundational principal?

#### Fruit water and yeast

Before we rush into other critical topics that define what is required to be free, like justice, grace, healing, confession, and forgiveness, let's further love as a foundation for democracy. The wedding story that took place in Palestine, in a village called Cana, is definitely a love story. And it is a foreshadowing of the miraculous transformation that God had in mind for humankind since our eviction from the Garden of Eden.

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## In our Prayers

Curtis Young	Austin & Mary Suffle
Rachel Bastine	Mirium Watson
Norma Buzzard	Shirley Craig
Mary Lyons	Christopher Lewis
Barbara McIvor	Sarah Tanner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Elaine Lamoreaux Mary Nations

The COVID-19 pandemic is serious and the numbers of new cases in Genesee County is rising again. If this continues we will suspend our in-person meetings again.

# Masks are a requirement while not eating or drinking.

If your health conditions prevent wearing a mask plan to stay away for now for your protection and the well-being of others.

We are meeting in person at 12Noon in the upstairs Library conference room. If our numbers increase enough to prevent adequate social distancing we will move downstairs. For now, you must bring your own lunch. We are not having a potluck lunch due to health concerns.

Pastor Tommy

## Coming up this week

July 20	Mon		
July 21	Tues	10am-2pm	Water / Food Distribution
July 22	Wed	Pastor Boo	k Club
		(in the Lib	rary Conference Room)
July 23	Thu		
July 24	Fri		
July 25	Sat		
July 26	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship

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JOIN WORSHIP ONLINE SUNDAY, JULY 19-10:30 AM

FACEBOOK LIVE OR WEBINAR ZOOM

JOIN BY PHONE +1 929 436 2866

MEETING ID: 324 841 204

JOIN ONLINE
HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/324841204

# Asbury Worship Series Freedom

July 4 is traditionally a big day in this country. But not for everybody. For a lot of people, the promise of freedom described in our country's declaration is elusive. For persons who must argue for, demonstrate for, and put their

life on the line for every policy that offers them a piece of the freedom claimed by our declaration, celebration waits for justice.

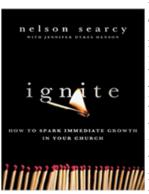


For many, Juneteenth is closer to a declaration of

freedom than July 4. June 19 is an important date because on that date in 1865, sufficient military strength arrived in Texas to enforce freedom for slaves. Two and a half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. But while that was an important step, it wasn't the giant step promised by our country's declaration. Page 5

### **Book Club News**

Our plan is for a few of us to meet in person beginning this



Wednesday. This also means moving our time back to 12 Noon. We will continue to be online for those who are not ready to meet in per-

son or who do not want to wear a face mask. Unfortunately, the virus is still a threat and in-person gatherings quickly become superspreaders if precautions are dropped.

We finished our study of discussions of other religions for now. This proved to be a fascinating subject for us that is sure to come up again in the future. Learning about what other people believe to be true about God did not diminish our own beliefs. Instead, this new knowledge strengthened our faith.

This week we begin our discussions of a book recommended by the staff of Sycamore Creek Church in Lansing. Several of us are participating in a monthly network group with people from sev-

Kevin Croom Dir. Operations
Blair Neifert Farm Manager
Matt Dee Farm Operations
Israel Unger Function to Funding
Kim Sims Connections
Karl Collyer Production
Katelin Maylum Production

### Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Jonathon, Terrance
Children Patrice & Mirium
Worship Leaders Cyndi
Café Christine & Norma

#### Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig Leadership Chair

#### Asbury Café

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each
Sunday before worship for coffee, tea, snacks,
conversation and so on. The music will start
when it is time to wrap up and head in
for worship.

eral churches. Each month we discuss a topic related to designing worship, hospitality, and church leadership. Our group realized that this book may be of interest to a larger number of people.

The book offers helpful suggestions for reaching persons who aren't a part of a faith community. The writer offers his own success and failures at communicating with people who usually don't understand why we believe with we believe. Our hope is that we can all benefit as more of us learn new ideas that we are willing to put into practice.

I encourage you to join us either in person or <u>online</u> for our Wednesday gatherings. You can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others are saying by calling (929) 436-2866, and entering the meeting ID, 482458815#.

We are a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — <u>FlintAsbury.org</u>.

### Freedom ... Cont. from page 4

What does it mean to be free? Freedom is a goal for every teenager I know, but what freedom looks like is different for each one. Does it mean I get to do whatever I want? Of course not. Freedom requires restraint. Freedom also means access to due process. That is, fair treatment in our judicial systems. Freedom is a big deal. And freedom requires the presence of justice.

There is this story about a time when an important community leader pleaded with Jesus to heal his daughter. So Jesus headed towards the man's home with a large crowd on all sides of him. There was a woman in the crowd who suffered terribly from severe bleeding. Jesus didn't know anything about her, but she believed that Jesus could help her.

The woman's condition had persisted for twelve years. She spent all her money on doctors and treatments that didn't work. Instead of getting better she got worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came in the crowd behind him, saying to herself, "If I just touch his clothes, I will get well."

As the s tory continues, the woman touched the cloak of Jesus, and her bleeding stopped. The woman felt the difference at once. And so did Jesus, who stopped in His tracks and asked the crowd of people around Him, "Who

touched my clothes?"

Some of His followers who were close to Him all answered at once, "You see how the people are crowding you; why do you ask who touched you?" Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.

The woman realized what had happened to her and she came forward, trembling with fear, to tell Jesus that it was her who touched His coat. The woman knelt at His feet, and told Him the whole truth. It must have been hard for her to do that.

She didn't know what Jesus might do. She didn't have a way to repay Him, and it is doubtful that she even realized the magnitude of what happened. What she did know without any doubt, was that she was healed. Touching the coat of Jesus accomplished what money and doctors were unable to do. And she was grateful.

But instead of blasting her, Jesus said, "My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your trouble."

Wow! What a story. This woman whose future was uncertain, with a condition that seemed impossible to rectify,

finds healing. But there is more than physical healing going on. After her confession, Jesus sent her on her way with a blessing of peace. The woman was both free of the condition that created so much distress, and free to live in peace.

This is the promise that God makes to all of us who suffer from a condition that no doctor can fix. It is a promise of freedom from conditions that hold us hostage. Freedom from the circumstances that keep us from enjoying the peace that only God can offer.

Of course, not long after this incident with the woman, and after Jesus healed the daughter of the important community leader, the story turns ugly. Regardless of the numbers that Jesus healed, He would later be arrested, denied justice, and hung on a tree until He died.

Afterwards, the lynching tree became a cross. And the cross a symbol for freedom for anyone who turns to Jesus to be set free. The freedom offered by Jesus is unconditional and eternal. The freedom that human-kind offers to each other is conditional and temporary. Nevertheless, God offers us a way if we are wiling to accept it.

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Volume 20 Issue 19 A Love Story (Wine, Water and Song) ...

Turning ordinary water into wine is a process that humankind discovered Thousands of years ago likely before the end of the Stone Age. Long before Jesus used this idea to save a party. Fruit is harvested and combined with yeast which begins the process of fermentation. During fermentation, sugars and starches turn into something new which benefits our immune system and the absorption of nutrients. In other words, turning fruit water into fine wine.

The first miracle of Jesus is also a foreshadowing of the process offered to you and I. It is a process from bondage to freedom. To be free, is to be free from bondage. Jesus frees us from bondage out of love.

#### **Dirty water**

Scripture doesn't say anything about the condition of the water before it became wine. Only that the jugs used to fetch the water was for bathing. Was the water freshly drawn from the local well?

The condition of the water doesn't seem to matter. Residents of Flint understandably shutter at the thought of using water from the public source for consumption. How could Jesus be certain that His wine was free of heavy metals like lead? Surely, Jesus didn't start with dirty water.

You have kept the best wine until now!

John 3:10

So the condition of the water isn't the point. If Jesus can turn water into fine wine, He can turn dirty water into wine that is free of contaminants. Likewise, Jesus can

transform you and me, regardless of our starting point, into something much better.

#### A love story

One of the most intriguing books found in scripture is the Song of Songs. A collection of erotic. blush-producing love poems that are seldom discussed in church. It is also the only book that is predominately the voice of a woman.

Both Jews and Christians assert that this love story reflects God's love for humankind, and God's desire for people to be free. The setting is a young, black woman, dominated and controlled by her older brothers. The woman worked in the family vineyards, without voice and without power over her own body, enslaved by systemic gender bias. She is treated as property to be traded for favor.

The woman not only uses her voice, she also empowers all women, even referring to her household as her "mother's" house. She is understandably skeptical and impatience with traditional wisdom. She is in love with another person that is of her choosing, going against the norm. The woman and her lover declare their freedom to pursue their love for one another, just as God offers you and me freedom to be who God created us to be.

Professor Renita Weems says this about the Song of Songs, "Intimacy can be as frightening as it is fulfilling...fraught with dangers, unknowns, demands, and unforeseeable consequences... relationships...must be cultivated,

nurtured, safeguarded, and cherished." Relationships cannot be taken for granted. Whether relationships with each other or with God.

I hear my lover's voice. He comes running over the mountains, racing across the hills to me.

Song of Songs 2:8

Love takes us beyond expected boundaries and self-interest past the limits of comfort zones. Love takes risks, embracing new ways of thinking and doing. Love says to you that your importance does not diminish my importance. Love celebrates your dreams and accomplishments.

Love does not measure your potential by my failures. Freedom without love is like wedding feast that run out of wine in the middle of the celebration.

#### Freedom

Love presumes relating to another person. But freedom and relationships are strange bed partners. For example, there is a common tradition of throwing a party for a friend to have one last fling before marriage. One final opportunity to let loose to be single and free, as though a commitment infringes on personal freedom. Yet freedom from the joy of being loved is an empty freedom.

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Likewise freedom from no relationships is emptiness. We all have a need to be loved. A need born within us and a reflection of a God who loves us without condition. Unconditional love places a value on each of us that defies calculation. There is no formula that can calculate the value of a human life, despite feeble attempts driven by profit or power to do just that. To treat another human as property is the very essence of depravity and oppression.

Democracy helps assure freedom. But freedom is only possible with relationships based on love. Love is the foundation for a democracy that assures freedom. And love talk is clearly missing in our public discourse. So, tell me what we celebrated on July 4?

### Coming up

This month we focus on freedom. We are not done claiming a new normal for ourselves. We begin July with a celebration of our declaration of freedom. But it is time to live as free people by first demanding freedom for all. We aren't interested in going back to the way things were with systems of injustice and segregation. We aren't trying to preserve a history. Our focus is to create a future. For more information our series, *Freedom*, see the article, Coming up in worship on our website.

I invite you to join us each Sunday. We plan to be live via webinar, through Facebook live,

Unconditional love places a value on each of us that defies calculation...

A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to <a href="mailto:info@FlintAsbury.org">info@FlintAsbury.org</a> or let us know when you send a message through our <a href="mailto:website">website</a>. We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose <a href="Message">Newsletters</a>.

**Pastor Tommy** 

#### Sources

Renita J. Weems. "The Song of Songs." The New Interpreters Bible, Vol V. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

# A prayer for Cooperation ...

Free us, Lord, from our obsession with ourselves long enough to Care for others; to be so concerned about the well-being of the human Community that we don't have to worry about our place, our Church, our class, our Values, our vested interests. Help us to know the joy and freedom of putting all our trust in you. Amen. 1

<sup>1</sup> Walter Brueggemann. Five Talents' Response to the Coronavirus. © March 26, 2020. Retrieved from: https://fivetalents.org/blog/2020/3/26/five-talents-response-to-the-coronavirus

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# Life groups question & notes

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you.

Matthew 5:38-39 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP			

## **QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS**

- 1. Read Leviticus 24:19-20 and Matthew 5:38-44. Contrast how the law explained in Leviticus differs from the interpretation offered by Jesus. Do you see a difference? How does this change your view of justice?
- 2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Restoring justice*. Do you understand the basic difference between retributive and restorative justice? In what ways is our system of justice like the law as it reads in Leviticus? How does our system of justice differ from the interpretation offered by Jesus in our reading from Matthew? What are some ways that we might utilize restorative justice to deal with offenses within our community? In dealing with racism?
- 3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.

#### Restoring Injustice (Do it for you and us) .. .cont from page 2

infectious particles, we haven't discovered an easy solution to preventing racism. Nor is there a pill that takes the pain and suffering away. Instead, we are left with a long term recovery.

One process that dates back to practices communities used long before the creation of judicial systems is restorative justice. The concept is simple. Everyone affected, including victims, offenders, and the community, participate in resolving the grievances and restoring peace. Offenses aren't ignored, nor is the harm caused reversed. Nevertheless, brokenness is healed rather than swept under a rug.

Retributive justice, on the other hand, seeks to punish offenders. Determining what happens next is delegated to others who are expected to have no particular bias in the matter, instead of those who are harmed participating in decision making. For example, the recent execution of a prisoner convicted of a federal offense was done despite the objection of the victim's family.

We claim that our justice system is based, at least in part, on scripture. How much so is worth debating.

Jesus was once talking to a group of people, telling them how to get along. At one point, Jesus said to the crowd, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'" The people listening knew what Jesus was talking about. One of the ancient laws that they followed used this same language.

The book of ancient laws, called Leviticus, describes how to deal with one person doing harm to another person. The law explains that whatever the offender does to the victim, the offender should have done to them. One example says that "if you knock out a tooth, one of your teeth shall be knocked out" (Leviticus 24:20).

The law doesn't specify who does the dental work. Whether a couple of community members should grab the offender and hold her while the victim knocks out a tooth. What if more than one tooth goes flying? Does the prior offender now become the victim? Where does the process of revenge end?

Jesus realized that the cycle of revenge never ends. Human nature doesn't work that way. Too often, after revenge takes place, there is retaliation on the revenge, and so forth. Particularly, since human nature tends to do more harm in revenge than the injury suffered. We like to teach them a lesson. "They must be punished," we argue. And within our justice system is an underlying premise that punishment deters further offenses.

So Jesus said, "But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you." How do we get justice if we just let a person off the hook who knocks out our tooth? What if justice has nothing to do with getting even, but everything to do with restoring peace?

#### TRHT

I recently shared a link to a website for *Hope in the Cities*, a non-profit providing assistance, tools, and techniques that help restore peace after an offense. The goal of the process is to move away from denial, guilt, shame, and blame. The goal of the process is to restore peace through honesty, reflection, and understanding of pain, trauma, loss, and crisis.

Last November, Asbury hosted a community meeting that included a facilitator experienced in Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation, or TRHT. We invited residents from our community to learn about TRHT, provide

feedback, and help craft a vision for eliminating racism in our community. The Community Foundation of Greater Flint partnered with the Kellogg Foundation to fund some initial work in bringing this process to the Flint community.

TRHT utilizes an approach known as restorative justice. The goal of restorative justice is to help the victim to be whole again. No system of justice that humans are capable of can bring back a life. The focus of restorative justice is restoring those who remain alive and preventing further injury.

In using restorative justice as an approach in dealing with racism, advocates of this approach recognize that there is an underlying myth that lies at the root of the problem. This myth is often described as believing that there is a "hierarchy of human value." The belief that one person's life is more valuable than the life of another person.

Any system based on this myth is inconsistent with the teachings of scripture. Yet, clergy throughout history argued in favor of this myth as justification for racist policies and laws. Recovering from centuries of systemic racism is possible and long overdue.

#### Coming up

This month we focus on freedom. We are not done claiming a new normal for ourselves. We began July with a celebration of our declaration of freedom. But it is time to live as free people by first demanding freedom for all. We aren't interested in going back to the way things were with systems of injustice and segregation. We aren't trying to preserve a history. Our focus is to create a future. For more information our series, *Freedom*, see the article, Coming up in worship on our website.

**Pastor Tommy** 

## Welcome to the Asbury Community

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## Freedom ...cont from page 5

It is a way to freedom that insists on freedom for all persons, unconditionally.

One of the many influences in my life is Dr. James Cone. Dr. Cone died a couple years ago, but his books, insights, and dreams live on. As I read a couple of chapters out of the last book he published before his death, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, I realized something we both had in common. Dr. Cone was also born in Arkansas.

But that is where our similarities end. As a white man, I am a representative of the group who oppressed Dr. Cone along with his ancestors, and all people of color whose bodies resided in this country. Any series on the subject of freedom is hollow if we fail to acknowledge the lack of freedom provided to our black and brown sisters and brothers.

And any acknowledgement of the centuries of injustice is hollow if there is no way forward to a time when we can celebrate our freedom together. But the call for action is not a whisper small, incremental steps. Rather, the call is a deafening and unsettling cry for justice and retribution.

Like the woman who bled for twelve years, our brothers and sisters are bleeding in the streets of our cities, from the hands and knees of violence. It wasn't long ago that our ancestors lynched black bodies from trees and celebrated their power over life and death. Not unlike those who tied Jesus to a tree. Claiming righteousness in the midst of violent injustice.

We are also bleeding from a condition that requires healing. We are suffering from the sickness that afflicts every oppressor. We crave forgiveness even more than we crave freedom.

The people of our capital city killed Him by hanging Him on a tree...

Acts 10:39

We all need to touch the coat of Jesus, and to confess that it is us who drained His energy in the hope of finding a solution to our suffering. And peach is ours when we at least surrender our privilege at the feet of the lynching tree.

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Our next series, begins the day after our nation traditionally celebrates our freedom. This year is different than past years. The pandemic brought to life our utter helplessness without a cooperative and collaborative effort. And we are not yet on the other side. Wouldn't it be just like God to hold our feet to the fire until at last, we confess our sin, not just with our intentions, but with decisive and lasting action.

The journey ahead promises to be difficult. The lynching tree on which Christ was executed in an effort to silence Him and return to normal, is both a symbol of salvation and despair. But God is never silent when it comes to injustice and oppression. And God speaks with decisive and lasting action. The Word of God never returns empty.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We plan to be live via webinar, through Facebook live, or you can call (929) 436-2866 and enter the meeting number — 324 841 204. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

**Pastor Tommy**