

Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent, March 8, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 396, "June 8, 1972", pp. 397-399, "Unbought", pp. 27-36, "Democracy" (part 3)

Nikole Hannah-Jones describes how, despite much of American history being a far cry from the nation's proclaimed ideals, Black Americans continue to serve the best ideals of this country through struggle, resilience, resistance, and song. "For the most part, Black Americans fought back alone, never getting a majority of white Americans to join and support their freedom struggles. Yet we never fought only for ourselves. The bloody freedom struggles of the civil rights movement laid the foundation for every other modern rights struggle. This nation's white founders set up a decidedly undemocratic Constitution that excluded Black people and did not provide the vote or equality for most Americans. But the laws born out of Black resistance guarantee the franchise for all and ban discrimination based not just on race but on gender, nationality, religion, and ability... The truth is that as much democracy as this nation has today, it has been borne on the backs of Black resistance and visions for equality."

I will keep your law continually, forever and ever.

I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought your precepts.

I will also speak of your decrees before kings and shall not be put to shame;

I find my delight in your commandments because I love them.

I revere your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.

Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope.

This is my comfort in my distress, that your promise gives me life.

The arrogant utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law.

When I think of your ordinances from of old, I take comfort, O Lord.

Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, those who forsake your law.

Your statutes have been my songs wherever I make my home.

(Psalm 119:45-54)

Take a moment to search for and listen to, "We Shall Overcome," "We Shall Not Be Moved," "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (ELW 841, TFF 296), and "Ella's Song"—and then read or sing the Psalm again. How do the Psalms sound when they are connected with the long movement of resistance and freedom? Often times, white Christians forget that the vast majority of scriptures were composed and compiled by an occupied people. Nikole Hannah-Jones argues that the best of this country was forged by Black Americans, and one could easily argue the best of Christianity has been forged by the black church and the church in the Global South, which can more clearly see and continue to fight for God's vision of community and liberation for all people.

Prayer

Almighty God, light a fire in our hearts and our bodies so we can joyfully sing, resist, and struggle with our black siblings and other occupied people for your liberation for all people to be birthed across the world. "We who believe in freedom cannot rest. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it come!" Amen.