

Faith In Practice

Life Changing Medical Mission

Perfect Freedom



Words like freedom, meaning and purpose are settling in like never before during this time. Freedom, a word many of us take for granted. But now, we are restricted, constrained. Hobbled from using our God-given talents in our vocations, our work which gives us purpose and meaning. Barred from caring for those most vulnerable as parents peer out from behind double-paned glass windows, beyond our reach. Invisible force-shields stop the bounding grandchild from jumping into waiting arms. In the most important places in our lives, we are constricted so much so that at times we feel our hearts constricting within us for the loss. Standing with hands empty.

Hands empty, yes, but ready to receive, I believe. Constrained, yet free to ask ourselves, within these restrictions of movement, what is crying out to be freed within us? Truly freed. What is standing in relief above all of the 'can't's, demanding to be heard now that so many of the 'musts' have been silenced? I have been trying to listen, to feel for the meaning behind each strain. What is

the meaning behind what is crying out, demanding, to be freed within me?

In the soup of these musings, the swirl of these echoes, St. Augustine's prayer keeps rising up inside me.

“Lord, you are the light of the minds who know you, the life of the souls who love you, and the strength of the souls who serve you. Help us to know you so that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom.”

Perfect freedom. The irony of it. All of the ways that we have been seemingly ‘free’ and yet has not our freedom limited us, clouded us, from understanding what perfect freedom really looks like? How it informs our true purpose, meaning? How sacrifice, seemingly relinquishing the ability to direct our own lives, leads us to freedom?

St. Augustine's prayer won't seem to leave me alone. In the midst of its gentle wrestling within me, I sit down to write this reflection. I turn to John's Eastertide story and read:

‘Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” ... Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Then Jesus tells Peter that he will lose all control over his life, even to the point of telling Peter that others will fasten his belt and take him to places he would not wish to go. After this stark and frightening statement, Jesus commands Peter to follow him.

Jesus is telling Peter, telling us, that we must relinquish physical freedom, go places we would rather not go, and to follow him. To follow him into the unknown, to serve, to love, and to trust as he leads us into and through uncertainty, fear, and loss. As he leads us into perfect freedom. Not what we think freedom has been or should be, or what we long to return to once the virus abates, but forward into his perfect freedom.

So, as I sit here, sharing my wanderings with you, I have been wondering if I have not had it wrong all along. Have I not, in all of the ways I thought myself to be free, been chained? How have I allowed the things that really did not matter obscure my ability to live most fully into the things that do?

As I ask myself these questions, I am reminded yet once again of how Jesus speaks to me through Guatemala. How her people live constrained lives and yet in them I am drawn to and can see what ‘perfect freedom’ looks like. How in the past I have longed for it, that peace in their faces. And, how I hope that when I return to meet them once again that I might see him in their eyes in a new way, as Jesus continues to lead them and me through uncertainty, fear, and loss, into his perfect freedom.

Although, Jesus is continuing to lead me through them, even though I am not currently with them physically. This week we were forced to lay off a third of our Guatemalan staff. Each individual's response to this news was filled with understanding, grace, and love. Each response reflecting a heart that knows what it is to follow him through uncertainty, fear, and loss into his perfect freedom.

So, it is my hope and prayer for myself and for you as we begin to return toward ‘opening up, returning to enjoy our freedoms’, that we might not forget. That we might not forget that he is leading us forward into his perfect freedom. A freedom that none of us would choose freely, or

could choose on our own without his help, but yet, the only freedom worth living for. His perfect freedom.

With gratitude and all to God's honor, glory, and praise.

Rev. Linda L. McCarty
President & CEO

Forward to a Friend



Copyright © 2020 Faith In Practice, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Faith In Practice
7500 Beechnut St Ste 208
Houston, TX 77074-4310
Add us to your address book

Want to make a life-changing gift? You can donate now online.

Thank you for subscribing to this Weekly Devotional.
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.
