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"If you want Peace, seek Justice for all"

Walk in Righteousness, depending on the Love and Spirit of Christ, as His servant forever"

April 28, 2015

Dear Friends in Christ,

I like to think I am sort of nice. However, I am convicted by the kindness from others, the good things I see others do, that I am not as nice as I think or should be. So many do so much more. What can I do? What can we do? Pray, turn ourselves over to God to mold, shape, use to accomplish all that He desires! In order to improve, change, grow in the Spirit of God, seek, ask, knock.

Talking with God in prayer is good, but if we do not talk with others in the faith, others in this world, we may be deceiving ourselves. We all know some who think they are great Christians that others know to be fools and frauds. Read, study God's Word. I find some think they know it correctly and fight others with different understandings. "We see through a glass darkly". God is beyond our understanding. He makes clear that we are to love everyone, even our enemies, even those we think are unworthy. He loved us when we were His enemy and unworthy!

In one area we are to be in competition with others in the faith. "Outdo one another in showing honor. Love one another with brotherly affection." He made us different, different tribes, languages, understandings. We do not have the same function in His plan.

We need to keep our eye, our mind, on His plan, His purpose. We are minor bit players, not central great figures. Indeed many of them in history have been on the dark side while His best servants have been obscure, unimportant by the world's standards. His purpose is Divine Victory of the light of redeeming love over all empty darkness. He calls us to carry that good news, the light of His love where ever we are and to who ever we meet. We do that by words and actions that comfort those hurting in darkness, by words and actions that repeat God's condemnations of the evil around.

Be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12.

In the name of one called by God to proclaim His Love for all,

Stephen H. Funck

The Sign of Concord

He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them. 2 Cor. 5:15

Easter . . . Two thousand and fifteen years ago! A stone was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb, that was used lay the battered body of a young Jewish man named Jesus. Angel's from heaven descended, that pushed away the stone, because a young woman who needed to grin entrance, but was physically unable to move the stone had come to pay homage, and to properly prepare his body with herbs and the required spices. She had made a connection, that she couldn't fully understand, but from the first moment that they had come together, her life was transformed . . . Jesus made her see things that she never know before. Now she wanted see that her special friend was able to receive a proper burial even as she made her way to the grave side, she kept going over conversations that she and Jesus shared saying that "I am the resurrection and the life", but she was carrying grave cloth and herbs and spices! Everyone thought that He was the savior of the Jewish race. His disciples all believed except for the one who betrayed him to the high priest! Judas Iscariot, "the traitor". All of Israel was talking about him, they either spoke good on his behalf or they mocked him! As she and the other woman with her were moving through the light of dawn, they heard a noise ahead of them, that was very loud, sounding as if rocks were rubbing against each other! Neither woman said a word all though . . . their hearts began beating at a faster pace! And then they saw the entrance open to the tomb where he was laid! They stopped looking at one another, neither was able to say a word. Sitting atop the stone was an angel whose countenance was like lightning . . . "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said! Come, see the place where the Lord lay! And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead and indeed He is going before you into Galilee. Behold I have told you." Immediately, dropping the items they were carrying, they turned and hurried back they way they had come so they could carry out the command they had been given by the Lord's angel! Still they didn't quite understand. So many unanswered questions? And now they were running to tell Peter and John and James as well as the others . . . what His holy angel and said about Galilee!

Ready to go fishing? Happy Easter 2015

from a brother at North Branch Correction Institution

I would love to include something you write to share. I will only include your name if you tell me to.

Events overtake plans. Thought I should send you what I wrote to local pastors and leaders about what is happening in Baltimore.

Brothers,

Under Mayor O'Malley arrests averaged over 100,000 a year for a city of 600,000. Do you really think they were all legitimate? My wife had a prayer partner who was victim of an assault. She was held for nearly a day before being released on her own recognizance. I like to think it was my intervention that prevented her from being given the normal \$50,000 bail (10% down) to avoid waiting in jail for a month till trial. They sold their home in Baltimore and moved to Pennsylvania. Many took pleas, admitted guilt, to go home, time served. Now they are admitted felons. Would you offer a man charged with 45 minutes of vaginal and anal intercourse with a 13 year old "plead guilty - go home today"? The girl was a virgin when examined afterward. It was her mother's boy friend she did not like - he would not let her friends tear up the house. It took two years awaiting trial before they made the offer.

Talking with a high ranking officer - later warden - about a fellow I knew serving 40 years for a murder he obviously did not do. The only thing that I could figure was that the cops were protecting the real murderer who was paying them off while he was dealing drugs. The reply: "happens all the time." The pattern I saw was that black men doing well, job, home, etc., were especially marked to be cut down along with foolish ignorant young men. Only once did I see a known "bad dude" falsely changed. Major Drug Kingpin I personally know, mandatory minimum - life, was out in 10 years, back in business. I think he was given a deal because of who - authorities in high places - he did not tell on.

The following from the op-ed page tells what it is like. It may be possible that conditions today are somewhat better. Is the 3rd circle of hell really better than the 5th?

The Bible - God - from beginning to end is adamant against the oppression of the unrighteous against the poor. On the day of judgment Mt 25 and in other places it is not murder, abortion, prostitution homosexuality that He sets forth as damnable. It is not helping - the sin of omission - the hungry, oppressed, prisoners. (In that day there were not many 'innocent' in prisons). Those who lead worship to the true God supporting the powerful as they oppressed the widow and orphan, dispossessing the poor from their land, livelihood were denounced by God's prophets.

"To whom much is given much is expected." Perhaps because we are so right, we deserve the hottest fires instead of the most glorious crowns?

By the way, I do not think I do very much of what He expects of me either.
Steve Funck Chaplain Baltimore City Jail for 20 years.

"If you want peace, act for justice."

Cops and 'Black Baltimore'

There are generations of discord between police and black communities in Baltimore

By Shaun La

The footage involving Freddie Gray and the Baltimore City cops brought it all back.

Growing up in 1990s Baltimore, some of the cops would use Black Baltimore as a playground to do whatever they wanted to do. Pre-teen years, I would hear from the teenagers and the older men in my neighborhood about the harassment, brutality and false arrests. I would watch their eyes and hear them mumble profanity at the patrol cars riding by them slowly, while the cops would make eye contact right back at them.

In my teenage years, I would start to see it for myself. Cops handcuffing you, followed with an order for you to stand in the hot sun. They would go back to sit comfortably in their patrol car with the A.C. running, eyes fixed on you, claiming they are radioing in your description, which would take them 20 or 30 minutes to complete.

The physical brutality by their hands ran rampant in the 1990s, especially in the summer seasons. Lord knows what my uncles and the fathers, older brothers and uncles of my childhood friends went through in the 1980s and 1970s, before mobile phone cameras and the Internet. Not to mention the verbal insults that you would hear from some of these cops smelling like aftershave and mouthwash: "Roaches!" "Junkie!" "[N-word]!" "Dummy!" "Shut the [expletive] up! I will lock you up if you say one more word." You could be sitting in your home, with your window up and open in Black Baltimore and hear this kind of dialogue.

Lately, this is why I have not been tuning into CNN or The Baltimore Sun online to see what the media is saying about my city. This is why 90 percent of time, I will stay quiet when people who are not from Baltimore ask me with intrigue in their eyes, "Is 'The Wire' like Baltimore?" Years ago when "The Wire" was on the air, people used to question why I would decline to watch it; I would answer, "Two white men are the creators of this show, and one is a former Baltimore City cop." I knew that I would lose them if I went into the details like I did in the paragraphs above this one, so I would stop my reasoning right there.

The media does Black Baltimore no favors in the fairness category. Either my people are hooked on drugs, romanticized as some mythical drug-kingpin or, as of recently, violent protesters without a cause. Such unfairness will instruct you to pay no mind to the progress the city has made and the history fueling today's protests: generations of blacks in Baltimore going through police brutality, verbally, emotionally and physically.

It is in my best prayers that Freddie's family heals and becomes stronger. Matter of fact, I extend that prayer to every black family who lost their loved one to police brutality. There is an element of being black and dealing with oppression that won't ever be fully expressed on television or in the newspapers, because after the camera crews leave, the inequalities somehow find a way to continue. Maybe in the future, if complete freedom does find a way to come, it will be in the form that such an element is not edited by those who do not know or understand. Maybe then they will shut up and listen.

Shaun La is a photographer, writer and a former Baltimore resident who now lives in New York City. His email is shaunthinking77@gmail.com . Website: www.shaunarts.com .

John Angelos CEO Baltimore Orioles

Brett Hollander
@BrettHollander

I'm by no means a legal scholar, so please understand that, but protests should not violate the basic freedoms of non-protestors. (2/4)

Hollander's take drew a lengthy response on Twitter from one somewhat unexpected source: John P. Angelos, Orioles chief operating officer and son of team owner Peter Angelos. Angelos agreed that protests first and foremost should be peaceful, but said the economic policies that are (in his view) devastating cities and communities like Baltimore were his "greater source of personal concern."

We've pulled together the tweets for you (emphasis ours):

Brett speaking only for myself i agree with your point that the principle of peaceful, non-violent protest and the observance of the rule of law is of utmost importance in any society. MLK, Gandhi, Mandela, and all great opposition leaders throughout history have always preached this precept. Further, it is critical that in any democracy investigation must be completed and due process must be honored before any government or police members are judged responsible.

John Angelos (Source: Twitter)

That said, my greater source of personal concern, outrage and sympathy beyond this particular case is focused neither upon one night's property damage nor upon the acts group but is focused rather upon the past four-decade period during which an American political elite have shipped middle class and working class jobs away from Baltimore and cities and towns around the US to 3rd world dictatorships like China and others plunged tens of millions of good hard working americans into economic devastation and then followed that action around the nation by diminishing every American's civil rights protections in order to control an unfairly impoverished population living under an civil rights protections in order to control an unfairly impoverished population living under an ever-declining standard of living and suffering at the butt end of an ever-more militarized and aggressive surveillance state.

The innocent working families of all backgrounds whose lives and dreams have been cut short by excessive violence, surveillance, and other abuses of the bill of rights by government pay the true price, an ultimate price, and one that far exceeds the importance of any kids' game played tonight, or ever, at Camden Yards.

We need to keep in mind people are suffering and dying around the US and while we are thankful no one was injured at Camden Yards, there is a far bigger picture for poor Americans in Baltimore and everywhere who don't have jobs and are losing economic civil and legal rights and this is makes inconvenience at a ball game irrelevant in light of the needless suffering government is inflicting upon ordinary Americans.

SHF comment I have not seen this any other time or place. It is being ignored.

Baltimore Police Beat Journalist During Protest (GRAPHIC VIDEO)

Author Information

| By AMANDA LEE MYERS Associated Press

Article Byline Information

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Huffpost Media

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AMANDA LEE MYERS,

BALTIMORE (AP) — A photo editor for a Baltimore newspaper says he was beaten by police at a protest over the death of Freddie Gray.

J.M. Giordano, who works at the City Paper, says Baltimore police "swarmed over" him and hit him repeatedly. A video posted to the newspaper's website Sunday shows at least two police officers in riot gear hitting and kicking Giordano as the person filming screams, "He's a photographer! He's press!"

jmgordanophoto3 days ago

Me being beat on by several @baltimorepolice. Video by Baynard woods. #freddieGray #baltimore

451 likes237 comments

Instagram

The 41-year-old Giordano says his head hit the ground during the beating, which he says only stopped when someone pulled him out of the fray.

Sait Serkan Gurbuz, a photographer with Reuters, says police detained him as he shot pictures of the scuffle. Reuters says Gurbuz was cited with failure to obey orders.

A Baltimore police spokesman hasn't immediately commented.

SHF comment

City Paper is owned by the Baltimore Sun Newspapers

They never mentioned one of their own staff was assaulted.

None of the Baltimore TV mentioned it. I am sure they saw the video.

I have not seen mention of this is any other place.