

Isaiah 49:1-7

John 1:29-42

1 Cor. 1:1-9

“God drew us up from a desolate pit,
out of a miry bog, and set our feet on a rock,
where steps are secure.” AMEN!

Sometimes a psalm just reaches out and grabs you.

Our time in Psalm 40 did that to me this week.

It began with “I waited patiently for the Lord,”
but it’s not a good translation.

The psalmist is NOT patiently waiting.

They’re waiting and waiting for the Lord.

What does it feel like to wait and wait? (Allow for answers)

Frustrated, upset, anxious, angry, provoked...

These days it feels a lot like we are waiting and waiting
for the Lord, and feeling all those emotions. (Pause)

There’s emotion in Paul’s, letter to the Corinthians, too.

He spoke about giving thanks to God
for the church in Corinth because it
had been given the grace of God.

A message he wrote from prison.

There's emotion because the church in Corinth
was divided and needed direction.

In essence, they were glorifying the body.

Putting excessive value in wisdom and elocution.

Using competition to look better and
above other people. (Pause)

We know a thing or two about glorifying the body.

All I need to do is look at
the closet full of clothing I have.

Shirts and pants are there, not because
I need them but because they
they glorify my body.

They make me look good so I feel good about myself.

Whether it's a tanning bed,
pills that help me look better, or
sex in advertising -

we are experts at glorifying the body,
but Paul wrote about
glorifying God with the body.

In other words, we physically do things

that glorify God like
serving other people.

The ones at the foundation of the power triangle.

We should put our bodies out there
to show God's love, mercy and concern
for the displaced.

This is perhaps what is most
disturbing about Renee Nicole Good's death.

She was glorifying God with her body,
and for it, she was shot three times in
the head for stepping into the breach.

It is not lost on us that tomorrow
we celebrate the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is also not lost on us that he wrote,
on the night before he was murdered, these words:

"Well, I don't know what will happen now.

We've got some difficult days ahead.

But I'm not concerned about that now.

I just want to do God's will."

The battle then is our battle now.

The battle going on today and the battle
that went on during the 60's is for
the soul of America.

The lifeblood of our nation is at stake and
the lifeblood of people is still being spilled
in the streets.

What will the response be from the body of Christ,
the church.

Will the church jump into the breach or
passively stand silent?

In 2025, Rev. David Black, pastor of
First Presbyterian in Chicago, wore his collar
to help keep others safe during
an immigration detention center protest.

Non-Christians recognized the presence of the church,
and hoped it would diffuse a dangerous situation.

When police and immigration officers
escalated their response,
people who protested peacefully and
properly exercised their rights to

free speech began to be arrested with an
overexertion of force.

Seeing this unfold Pastor Black
knelt in prayer on the pavement and prayed aloud
for both the officers,

for the unseen detainees in the van,
and for the protestors.

With the words of Jesus, he prayed,
“Repent and believe the good news
for the kingdom of God is at hand.”

As he prayed on his knees, officers dragged
him across the concrete and shot him
with pepper balls.

One even striking him in the head.

In that moment, the body of Christ was literally in
the line of fire, not to curse enemies,
but to intercede for both the oppressed and
the oppressor, pleading that those
with power would turn from injustice.

(Pause)

Such sparks of action from people insists
that Jesus’ kingdom has a claim on how
vulnerable people are treated.

The wave of such events have described
congregations like this, who jump into the breach,

to be “reparative churches,”

communities of people who cry out
for equitable treatment of the marginalized and
repair social wrongs by concrete actions.

Letters, phone calls, and visits to protect neighbors
and confront abusive power with peaceful protest,
prayer, and calls for positive change.

(Pause)

Last week, in Matthew’s gospel, we learned
about what God does,
today is about what we do
once God has found us.

What we do is, find others and invite them to,
“Come and see.”

AMEN!