

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Proclaim Jesus" 7/13/22

*And every day - in the temple and at home -
they did not cease to teach and proclaim
Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:43)*

Life is tough. Sorry. But it is not fair. Stuff happens. Things go wrong. How can we find joy? How can we have fun? When will things go right for me? Well, we don't find our joy in stuff or situations, we find our joy in God, we just have to remember – joy is not the same word as happy. The stoics tell us the obstacle is the way. The rough edges we pass by, those which scratch and wear on us, form us into the people God created us to be. And God gives us all we need to get through the rough patches.

Paul writes - while in jail - to tell the people what had happened to him – was all for Christ. Those “tough times” were helping to spread the Gospel. Followers, seeing Paul in jail, were made confident to speak God's word, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We take strength from Paul's times in jail. They help us to see who we are and Whose we are, what our mission is, and how we are met in the dark places and strengthened to carry on. In our baptism we vowed, with God's help and guidance, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. We want to live our life according to God's teachings and reflect God's love to others with our words, our actions, and reactions.

We desire to follow God's command to love our neighbors, to feed the hungry and care for those in need. We want to react with patience, to be gracious. In a world where we can be anything – we want to be kind. During joyous times and times of distress, what we say and how we act reflects Who we follow.

We want to pray, along with the early believers, “Through the threats we face, may God grant us to speak God's word with all confidence.” (Acts 4:29)

From jail, Paul asked for prayers, knowing with the help of the Spirit, they would become his deliverance. He hoped not to be put to shame, but to exalt Christ, through his words and actions. Oh, that we could look upon the ups and downs we face and give them to God and pray for our reactions to glorify God and His message of love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

We each face our own worst, and God is there for each of us, to strengthen us and to walk through the fire with us. For God has promised the fire will not consume and the waters will not overwhelm. God is with us, and we are not to be afraid. Just hold on. Continue. Give it – the good and the bad, the fair and the unfair, the unexplainable and the unavoidable, the victories and the defeats - to God. May the Lord be glorified by our actions and reactions, by our words and our works.

Please pray with me. *God of the journey, thank You for traveling with us, for guiding us, protecting us, loving us, and for Your presence in the darkness. We pledge to keep our covenant to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed and pray You will help us and guide us so to do.*

Amen.