

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

Rev. Kwame Pitts

August 12, 2018

The sounds from the jail cells of the Wilmington Ten

Are echoes of a massacre keeping Black freedom locked in

The sounds of struggle you hear that are filling your world today

Are echoes of the voices your fathers killed and smothered away

You can steal my tongue

I dare you to try to hush my song

My screams of freedom will flood the air

Of your children - centuries unborn

Good morning,

I bring you greetings

From your fellow sisters, brothers and siblings in Christ

Of Body and Soul UChicago Campus Ministry,

At Augustana Lutheran Church,

Where we are committed

To living out our faith,

Through concrete action,
Because who are we to tell someone,
that they should just pound the pavement
until they find a job,
when we know that the system
is corrupted
and instead,
we give of ourselves
not only through sacred worship
but the sharing
of sacred
food,
that should always come
without price,
and cost.

We can spout Scripture,
Twisting it to judge people,
Based on our understanding
And definition
Of morality.
But we rarely,
Live it out.

The elephant

In the room

For many Christians,

Is the word

“responsibility”

“Responsibility,”

Quotes Dr. Michael Battle,

In his article

About the incarceration of Black Spirituality

And the disenfranchised,

“means not just that

We are responsible to others,

And that others have a right to demand

Certain kinds of behavior

From us,

We are also responsible

FOR each other.

Each of us

Must answer

For someone else’s welfare,

As well as our own,

And that means

That someone else
Must answer for us,
Whose concern
Is
Our
Welfare.”
We,
As Christians
In this American context
Have done a poor job
With hearing the WORD
And allowing that WORD
To feed us
Allowing that WORD
To nurture those seeds
That the Creator planted
Within us
Allowing the WORD
To heal us
When we stumble back,
Reeling from the poison
That this world

Has forced

Into

Our

Very

Being.

I had a conversation

With my Mother

A couple of nights ago,

As an Elder and matriarch of our family,

She should be

Enjoying this season of her life.

But each morning

She asks of the Creator,

To give her purpose

And an opportunity

To serve.

She told me the story

Wednesday evening

How she spent helping a young woman

Of 29

And her 5 children

Who

Were homeless.

My mother lives in South Holland, IL

It is the place I first served after I was ordained

It is also the place I became even more disillusioned

With those who identify,

But do not walk

Or follow

The Risen One,

Jesus Christ.

In this entire suburb,

With more churches

Per square foot,

None of them

Were open,

None of them

Were willing

None of them,

Answered my mother's call

For assistance.

The local police,

Disregarded

This young mother,

Disregarded perhaps,
The WORD that I would hope
Was being preached and taught
In those holier than thou churches
That I knew,
Many of these public servants
Were “members”

*“So then,
putting away falsehood,
let all of us speak the truth
to our neighbors,
for we are members of one another”*

But apparently,
These teachings,
These words here,
Hold no weight
For police officers
Who only saw
Michael Brown’s skin
And decided
That he was a threat
That merely needed to be

Eliminated

These people

Watching the anguish of a city

Pointing and judging a community

Saying

“Are these not the same

POOR

PEOPLE.

The children of

Ferguson,

Because we never bothered to build relationships

With their mothers

And fathers

And we know,

Won't amount

To anything.

Why are they

Protesting?

Why are they

Resisting?

Why are they

Reacting?

Is this not
Heather Heyer,
Daughter of Susan,
Whom none of us knew
Until
A white supremacist
Decided that her body was not sacred enough
That he could not see,
The reflection of the One
Who proclaimed
“I am the living bread
that came down from heaven!”
That Good News,
That is for all of us.
Instead,
Heather’s life
Was not sacred enough
As another fellow beloved
Of the One
Who cradled us,
Breathed us
Into this Life

And surely,
Recognizes all of us,
As the Creator did of Heather,
And Michael
And Martin
And Dr. James Cone
And Dr. Katie Cannon
And Tamir
And Travyon
And called them,
Back
Beyond the veil
into
Eternal
Life.
But,
We miss the WORD!
We push away from the Table,
The Good FOOD
We frown at the Bread
Before us
Instead filling our very being

With other things.

That never satisfy our cravings

And can we talk about the shade

Jesus throws here?

*“Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness,
and they died”*

Like Jesus gets real.

This physical food,

That we think can cure all

Cannot.

This human made power,

That we think can fulfill our every wish

Cannot.

These status symbols,

This selfish way of living

That we think can make our lives great again,

CANNOT.

Especially,

When we're not even living

According to what Jesus Christ had been teaching the people,

His disciples

Those non believers-

Who did not want to believe in Jesus

Because His way,

God's Word,

The Spirit feeding us

Makes us

Uncomfortable

Because then,

We live our lives

For others,

And not just

For ourselves

When we refuse,

this life giving food,

that Jesus gives of Himself

and feeds us

“and the bread

that I will give

for the life of the world

is my flesh.”

“Let no evil talk

come out of your mouths,

but only what is useful for building up,

*as there is need,
so that your words
may give grace
to those who hear.”*

Who needs to hear,

From you

Who needs to be fed

With the food you carry,

Which comes from the seeds

Planted within,

How will we remember,

Repent

And

Repair

What will we commit to?