

DAY 29: MONDAY

Celebrating Liberation

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

Exodus 15:20–21

Reflect

Freedom and equality, justice and peace are never handed over to us on a silver platter. They are achieved with persistent effort and prayer, and sometimes with blood and tears. At the time of writing, people in the United States and all over the world are aching from the death of George Floyd and protesting his killing by police. I too feel a deep sense of anguish.

I remember when there were protests in South Africa against apartheid—so many people were shot by the police. One Sunday morning, I felt heartsick upon hearing the news that over 20 protesters had been shot. My minister, the Rev. Sang Chul Lee, preached that day about what we were seeing in the headlines: "What is happening in South Africa is, in fact, good news. The people of God are saying no to racism, hatred, and oppression. And, they are willing to fight for freedom for their brothers and sisters!" I was mesmerized by this perspective. Now I see the protests happening around the world as also a kind of good news: people are fighting for a world free from racism and violence.

Our God hears the cries of the people, as God also heard the cries of the Israelites suffering under slavery in Egypt. In response, God sent ten plagues to finally convince the pharaoh to let the people go. Yet, the pharaoh still dug in his heels and chased the Israelites right to the Red Sea, where

they would have been trapped. God parted the sea, and the people tasted freedom for the first time. To celebrate, Moses wrote a song and Miriam took a tambourine and led all the women in a dance.

There is a wonderful Jewish hymn in *Voices United* (131), “If Our God Had Simply Saved Us.” It recounts the story of Exodus step by step, verse by verse. The hymn celebrates the God who liberates, who is on the side of the oppressed, who journeys with us to our freedom. Such is God’s nature, and I give thanks to God for journeying with us to freedom today.

Ponder

- When have you experienced liberation from something that stifled, oppressed, or limited you? How did you achieve it? How did you feel?
- Where are the people of God struggling for freedom in this world?
- How will you journey with God in pursuit of liberation for members of your community and the people of this world?

Pray

Compassionate God, my heart aches for a world that is suffering from racism, hatred, and oppression. Surely this is not how you want us to live. Heal our sorrow and calm our fears that we may take steps toward repentance and reconciliation. I ask for your Spirit to guide me, your love to surround me, and your vision to inspire me to do your will. Amen.

Practise

If God gave you courage, what would you be able to do for others’ liberation? Do that in gratitude.

Won Hur