

Freedom BOUND

Advent - Epiphany 2015

Advent Two: The Path of Mercy

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- Why the theme "Freedom Bound" for this series?
- We live in the paradox where we are both bound and free, on a march to freedom but encumbered by the burden of sin we carry; we are carrying the scars of struggle but living with a new hope.
- Therefore, we will be reflecting on how God's coming (advent) in Jesus, whom we call the Christ, releases us from personal, social, and historical chains that bind us.
- God's freedom takes us down pathways of: **justice, mercy, trust, love, service, and inclusion.**

Psalm 25:1,4 NIV

¹ In you, LORD my God,
I put my trust.

⁴ Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.

⁵ Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.

Malachi 3:1-2 NRSV / NLT

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes.

Luke 1:76-79 NIV – Zechariah's Praise

“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

John 1:1-5 NLT

- ¹ In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
- ² He existed in the beginning with God.
- ³ God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.
- ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.
- ⁵ The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:6-9 NLT

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

The Emerald Rainbow of God

John, Revelation 4:2-3 NRSV – Vision of God's Merciful Light

² At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! ³ And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald.

Jasper – sparkles & flashes (holiness & glory of God)

Carnelian – deep reddish, smoldering fire (wrath against sin)

Emerald – soothing green like meadows & forests

Rainbow – symbol of divine mercy (overarching all of God)

“Be merciful, just as your Father [God] is merciful.”

Jesus, Luke 6:36 NIV

Mark 10:46-48 NIV

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark 10:49-52 NIV

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

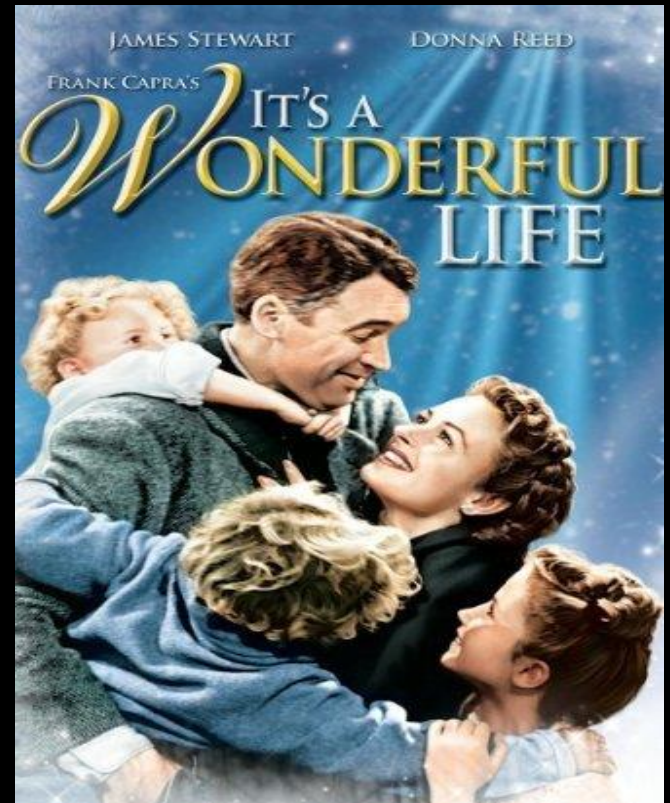
The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.”

Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

What is God like?

According to Frank Capra's
"It's a Wonderful Life"





“Please, God, let me live again.”

James 2:12-13 MSG

¹²⁻¹³ Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free. For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time.

Walking the Road to Freedom

- What is your portrait of God? Does he look like Mr. Potter? Or does he look like the coming Christ? Our actions often come out of our thoughts about God.
- If you see God as merciful to you, despite all of your own sin and darkness, you *will* be merciful to others.
- God wants to free us with his mercy, opening our eyes to his goodness, and to the wonder-full life.
- Where (or to whom) do you need to show mercy? Who do you need to show mercy to so that you might receive God's mercy and live in freedom?

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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org