

“A Museum Filled with Hopes and Dreams”

Philippians 4:10-13

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Communion Devotion

The Lorraine Motel is now a museum. On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated while standing on the second floor balcony. He went to Memphis to march with the striking sanitation workers, even though he had been warned it was too dangerous.

Sometime after the Lorraine Motel had been turned into a museum, a woman stood on that balcony and quietly said, “I can be anything I want to be because of the blood on that concrete.”

I don’t know if these words are printed on a plaque on that balcony, but they should be. This brave man’s life and death continue to inspire people of all races to dream their own dreams for a better life and a just world. Dr. King’s willingness to call discrimination evil and offer a different vision for the future, one based upon justice and peace, has ushered all of us into a world of new possibilities.

“I can be anything I want to be because of the blood on that concrete.” What a tribute!

This is not the first time the shedding of innocent blood has inspired us. We can look at the elements on the communion table and feel the same way. We, too, can be anything we need to be and do anything we need to do because of the blood Jesus shed on the cross at Calvary.

Perhaps Paul felt this way as he reflected upon the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. “I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength,” Paul wrote to the Philippians.

This covered a lot of territory. Paul’s life was anything but easy. He was arrested many times, beaten on at least eight occasions and pelted with stones once. Paul was imprisoned with little to eat or drink for long periods of time and separated from friends and family as he traveled on his missionary journeys to start new churches. When he wrote he could do all

things through Christ, he really meant it, including the most intimidating and life-threatening challenges.

Why did Paul feel this way? *He knew whatever trial or challenge he faced, Jesus was with him.* Jesus knew what it was like to take risks, accept big challenges, be mistreated and feel all alone, and as a result, he would draw close to Paul, even in a prison cell deep in the bowels of a cave.

Barbara and Jim are friends in a church from an earlier pastorate. Their three boys were teenagers when I was at that church, and all of them were talented athletes. One time when I was visiting in their home, I noticed a note Barbara had written and placed on the refrigerator. It was obvious no one could open the door without reading it.

“For this, I have Jesus,” it read. Simple. Profound. Reassuring.

“This quote reminds me whatever comes my way, I don’t face it alone, or whatever challenge I accept, I do not attempt it by myself. Always and at all times, Jesus is here and will provide the strength, courage, wisdom, stamina and hope I need to get through it,” she told me.

I cannot tell you how many times I have whispered those words to myself. Maybe Paul did, too.

Paul knew he could accept great challenges because Jesus would bring people into his life to encourage and support him. These dear friends at Philippi were proof of that. They had been his most loyal supporters and biggest cheerleaders as he unleashed his potential and theirs.

“I thank my God every time I remember you,” he wrote at the beginning of this book. Paul’s heart was overflowing with gratitude for each one of them and every act of kindness. They, along with many believers in other communities, were God’s finest gifts to him.

What is the biggest challenge you are facing this morning? Are you locked in a struggle with a problem that won’t go away? Are you enduring hardships you never dreamed would come your way? Are you being called by God and others to take risks and head in a new direction? Is your heart filled with fear and trepidation? Has your confidence been undermined?

Whose help do you need? Would you like to have Jesus walk with you? Do you need a circle of friends to support and encourage you?

Through faith in Christ, you can have both. He will never leave nor forsake you and will bring people into your life to walk alongside you.

Jesus did this for Paul, which led him to write, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." Will you let him help you?

Who needs your help today? Who needs you to support and encourage them?

"I can be anything I want to be because of the blood on that concrete," the woman at the Lorraine Motel said that day.

Would anybody say that of you? Have you made it possible for someone to enter a world of new possibilities through your investment in their life?

What could you say which would instill confidence in their heart? What could you do which would open doors of opportunity? What sacrifices could you make which would enable someone to achieve their potential or overcome their biggest struggle? Are you willing to be that unselfish and bold? Will you let this be your legacy?

Think about this as we are reminded of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf to help us achieve our potential and overcome our struggles.