“I Call You Faithful” with Donnie McClurkin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqyEu64kYd0>

“Jehova is Your Name” with Ntokozo Mbambo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro9KtH6cSVU>

“Just for Me” with Donnie McClurkin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABP7wREZMKM>

“Just for Me Medley” with Donnie McClurkin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi9HT65EehY>

“All We Ask” with Donnie McClurkin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-5h89CWxPo>

“Mercy Said No” with CeCe Winans

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQaOl7qH31w>

“My God is Awesome” with Charles Jenkins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YJ4vddbJJo>

“Turning Around for Me” with VaShawn Mitchell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzbKwcC-Xmo>

“Joy” with VaShawn Mitchell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yl5lKSTtPR8>

“Lord of All” with Briana Babineaux

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiO6v3svtzQ&list=PLE28KHrzF_Wb92cVY-jX_quopYsEJmGws&index=10>

“Glory to God” with Kurt Carr

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lx3OLgvjCs>

“I’ve Seen Him Do It” with Kurt Carr

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59IWHgH995g>

“I Need You to Survive” with Juanita Bynum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpLzqtK16RY>

“Glory” with John Legend and Common

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnIozPJWTPM>

“Jehovah Fill This Room Medley” with Benita Washington

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AdiDYd6hUE>

**The Beauty of Our Sacred Lives**

*Galatians 1:3-7a*

Praise the Lord! I hope all is well. This *Galatians 1:3-7a* Bible Study encourages us to believe that our lives are sacred and valuable to each other.

What does God think about the shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, and then the killing of Dallas police officers?

Thinking about our cruelty to each other, I remembered from Union Theological Seminary a picture of a Roman soldier crushing the head of a Galatian with his feet. In another scene, Suetonius’ Nero 41.2 described how Roman Emperor Nero left a battle in defeat from the Galatians but ‘noticed a monument on which was sculpted the defeat of a Gaul warrior by a Roman calvalryman, who was dragging him by his hair; at which sight he was filled with joy and praised heaven.’ (Kahl, Brigitte, *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished,* USA, Fortress Press: 2010, p. 1) Romans brutalizing Galatians were encouraging to the Romans who ruled over Galatians.

Romans also depicted Galatians as being a threat to society. “Galatians (or Gauls), Jews, and Christians as well had one thing in common: all were suspected of subverting law and order.” (Kahl, p. 2)

So in light of the oppressive police tactics against Alton Sterling and Philando Castile that resulted in their deaths, I looked to Paul’s letter to the Galatians to see what God might say to us today. We turn our attention to *Galatians 1:3-7a:*

*3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from one Lord Jesus Christ.*

*4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

*5 To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.*

*6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:*

*7 Which is not another;*

The events of this week portrayed the depths of our present evil world of economic neglect, racism, impatience, disregard, selfishness, political opportunism, inaction, and vengeance.

But Jesus died so that He might deliver us from this present evil world. Jesus died for our sins so that we might receive God’s forgiveness and have the righteousness to live differently from this present evil world. Jesus died for our sins and arose from the consequences of our sins to let us know that our sins do not define the ends of our lives. Jesus died for our sins and rose from them to let us know that we could rise from our sins. Jesus died for our sins and conquered death so that we could be fearless about anything that might threaten us. Jesus died for our sins and God crowned Him with victory and growing dominion over everything that might keep us in bondage. Jesus died for our sins and God placed Jesus at God’s right hand to make intercession for us in our deepest needs. Jesus died for our sins so that we might be able to take on Jesus and Jesus’ righteousness in the depths of our despair and decay.

*Jesus gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world, Galatians 1:4a.* We cannot deliver ourselves from this present evil world and walk away from it. We need Jesus for deliverance from this present evil world. The Greek word for “deliver”, transliterated “exaireo” (G1807), means to pluck out, draw out, or root out. It has the sense of tearing us away from this present evil world, and that we need Jesus to be torn away from today’s evils.

It will be tough to tear away our black men and women from a present evil world where we are suspect and wrongly accused. It will be tough to tear away white police officers from assuming that the black people they meet need to be treated aggressively so that officers always have an upper hand. It will be tough for our society to make financial sacrifices so that there are more job and education opportunities than crime opportunities for our youth and young adults. It will be tough to tear away our justice system from bias and create the just atmosphere for the prosecution and rehabilitation of wrongful cops and criminals.

But the mere fact that we need Jesus to tear us away from this present evil world does not mean that this world or any of us were made for this present evil world. We are sacred and God made us to be sacred and valuable to each other. It is God’s Will that we be free. It was God’s Will that Jesus gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world.

Paul did something when God His Father came into his writing. Paul stopped to praise God *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Paul was filled with joy that there would something glorious about God forever and ever, and wished that God’s glory would be fulfilled (Amen) again, and again. Let it be. Amen. So be it. Amen.

When each of us are delivered from this present evil world, there is something wonderful in each of us and about each of our salvations that says something wonderful about God. The glory of God is upon us for what God has done in our lives.

In fact, most of what we know about God is from what God has done in the lives of other people. When God helped Israel defeat the Amalekites as long as Moses held his hand up during the battle, God also promised that God would *have war with Amalek from generation to generation, Exodus 17:16.* Therefore, Moses concluded that God had a banner over Moses in this present evil world and called God, Jehovah-nissi.

When David saw God protect his father’s sheep in the wilderness, and when Jacob saw God protect his son Joseph through slavery in a foreign land, they both called God, Jehovah- raah, the Lord My Shepherd and Friend. (See *Genesis 48:15 and Psalm 23:1)*

When the Israelites drank from the bitter waters of Marah, God showed Moses a tree to throw into the waters and make them sweet. Then, Moses heard God say, *If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee,” Exodus 15:26.* And from there Moses called God, Jehovah-rophe, the Lord who heals.

Ezekiel saw a vision of a New Jerusalem restored by the Lord. *[A]nd the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there, Ezekiel 48:35.* Thus, Ezekiel called the Lord, Jehovah-shammah, The Lord is There.

When Judah was on the brink of utter destruction for its utter sinfulness and desolation, God promised Jeremiah that *Judah [would] be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness, Jeremiah 33:16.* Thus, Jeremiah knew God as Jehovah-tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness when we have no righteousness in us ourselves.

When Hagar, pregnant by Abram, fled from the abuse of her mistress, an angel met her by a fountain, comforted her, and told her to go back into her abusive situation under the protection of God. *9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. 10 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 11 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction…13 And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? 14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi* which meeans the well of him that liveth and seeth me, *Genesis 16:9-11, 13-14.*

God lives and God sees, said Hagar. Jehovah-rohi. And there are people in this present evil world, delivered and torn away by Jesus, who will also know that God lives and God sees.

Within each and every one of us delivered by Jesus from this present evil world are the seeds of blessings for someone else who needs to know who God is. Our sacred lives are beautiful and valuable to others who need to know who God has been to us. That is why Paul wondered why the Galatians had so soon distanced themselves from the people who called them for some other false promise of good news. The Good News is the workmanship of God in all of us. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Ephesians 2:10.*

In this present evil world, Jesus delivers us and we have each other to know more about God. *Unto [Jesus] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through all ages, world without end, Ephesians 3:21.* I pray that the pain of this week brings us ever closer to each other in fellowship, knowing each other’s struggles, knowing each other’s triumphs, and knowing the Lord who died so we could be free.

Grace and Peace,

Tobias Pinckney, Powered to Witness University, 7/9/16

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