

March 3, 2021

Read Exodus 14

Key verse: Exodus 14:13a

But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today."

Standing Firm in the Lord

Having just come through Black History Month and now entering Women's History Month, we ought to remember those who stood firm in their resolve to gain their God-given rights not as Americans but as human beings. Today happens to be the 108th anniversary of The Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC, where over 8000 women gathered to demand a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to vote. The women's suffrage movement began in the 1840s. For over eighty years suffragettes were mocked, spit upon, arrested and imprisoned, beaten, and even force-fed. They marched, lobbied, and picketed for decades until, finally, in 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote, became part of the US Constitution.

Today we would find it unthinkable to deny any United States citizen the right to vote, but we must not forget those courageous and determined women who stood firm against those who would treat them as lesser citizens than men. Today we would call a woman's right to vote a *God-given* right though it has taken us awhile to see it that way.

But God has been on the side of human rights from the very beginning, claiming an enslaved race as his Chosen People and leading those people out of bondage and into a Promised Land. In fact, it is in the struggles for justice and equality that God makes his presence most known in human history – in the Abolitionist movement, in the Women's Suffrage movement, and in the Civil Rights movement. In all of these campaigns courageous people placed their faith in the God of the Hebrews, the God of the Downtrodden, to liberate them and to dignify them.

It's hard sometimes to continue the struggle to dignify all people; if you're white and male like me the temptation is to sit back and enjoy all the unearned privileges that come with my gender and skin color. If you're not so white or not so male, the temptation is to give up the struggle and settle for a lesser status, for fewer rights and privileges, to not "raise waves." But we must remember that stands with the oppressed, and thought the struggle may be long and difficult, God always prevails.

Prayer: God of human dignity, help us not to settle for injustice, particularly when the status quo works in our favor. Instill in us your passion for justice that leads us to stand with the downtrodden and marginalized peoples of this world. Help us to see other as equally loved and cherished by you so that we may treat others as we would expect to be treated by them. Amen.