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Challenge Day 8 of 40

Thoughts by Chaplain Paddy McCoy

If you've watched the news, or stayed in touch with social media in the last week, then I'm sure you've been flooded with stories, quotes, opinion pages, and more from events that transpired in Ferguson, Missouri. Outrage, riots, a united grand jury, and a confused general public speaking out about their own feelings of what took place on August 9, 2014, when Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed 18 year-old Michael Brown. When everyone has a platform in our culture to share their thoughts, whether in a Tweet, Facebook post, online video rant, email, or more, it can be hard to decipher truth. Yet, somehow, I found TRUTH, as I was surfing these platforms trying to discern what really took place.

Benjamin Watson, a player for the New Orleans Saints, wrote a post Tuesday evening, November 25, at 6 p.m., concerning his thoughts and reaction to what was taking place in Ferguson and around the country. The post was heartfelt and showed a lot of conviction from this 36-year-old professional football player. Many have read his comments as they have been "liked" by nearly a million people, shared by a half-million, and viewed by many more.

If you haven't read it yet I encourage you to read it [here](http://the1project.org), but to summarize, Watson echoed the thoughts of many as he spoke about feeling, "Angry, Frustrated, Fearful, Embarrassed, Sad, Sympathetic, Offended, Confused, Introspective, and Hopeless.” Watson then ended with a surprising conclusion. He stated that in the midst of this horrific tragedy and the nation-wide unrest connected to it, he felt both "Hopeful" and "Encouraged." Hopeful because he feels that though there are still many issues of race in our society, we have at least grown from where we were 60 years ago and that growth has been good.

Then it was in the following words that I found an incredible TRUTH. Watson writes, "I'm ENCOURAGED, because ultimately the problem is not a SKIN problem, it is a SIN problem. SIN is the reason we rebel against authority. SIN is the reason we abuse our authority. SIN is the reason we are racist, prejudiced and lie to cover for our own. SIN is the reason we riot, loot and burn. BUT I'M ENCOURAGED because God has provided a solution for sin through His son, Jesus, and with it, a transformed heart and mind. One that's capable of looking past the outward and seeing what's truly important in every human being. The cure for the Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice and Eric Garner tragedies is not education or exposure. It's the Gospel. So, finally, I'M ENCOURAGED because the Gospel gives mankind hope.”

In Watson's reflection I find echoes from the following ancient words...
"She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." [1]

"For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." [2]

"But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." [3]

"Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" [4]

We certainly do have a SIN problem, but Jesus came that SIN may not have dominion over us any more, He came that we might be set free from the law of sin and death, and that we might hope in the day when SIN and all the horror it has caused, in Ferguson, Missouri and around the world, will be no more.

And with those thoughts of all that our glorious Savior has done for us, I close with these words penned in 1865...

I hear the Savior say, “Thy strength indeed is small;
Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all.”
Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.
For nothing good have I, Whereby Thy grace to claim;
I’ll wash my garments white, In the blood of Calv’ry’s Lamb.

And now complete in Him, My robe, His righteousness,
Close sheltered ’neath His side, I am divinely blest.
Lord, now indeed I find, Thy pow’r, and Thine alone,
Can change the leper’s spots, And melt the heart of stone.
When from my dying bed, My ransomed soul shall rise,
“Jesus died my soul to save,” Shall rend the vaulted skies.
And when before the throne, I stand in Him complete,
I’ll lay my trophies down, All down at Jesus’ feet.

Thank you Lord Jesus!

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[1] Matthew 1:21

[2] 2 Corinthians 5:21

[3] Isaiah 53:5-6

[4] Romans 7:24-25
Recalibrate

1. What are some of the SIN problems in your life, or that you see in the world around you, that need Jesus' help and the hope of His death and resurrection?

2. Where have you seen Jesus at work in recent days/weeks that brings you encouragement?

We'd love to receive your thoughts/questions/answers here.