

Dear Disciples: June 10, 2022

Rev. Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens

Hello Disciples, I don't need to tell you that there is a lot going on in the world but I'll say it—there is a lot going on in the world. Our news continues to bring us stories of horror after horror more and more mass shootings with deadly assault weapons of war, police continuing to kill black men during traffic stops, more and more natural disasters tornadoes, wildfires hurricanes in

season and out of season, the increased pressure of inflation upon over 140 million people who live in poverty in the United States alone. Everything from gas to food to housing and utilities all going through the roof. The disease we call Covid-19 continues to morph and infect that disease continues to be a pandemic all around the world. What then shall we say to these things and how are we as followers of Jesus Christ, the people of God, the church of Jesus Christ to answer. What then shall we say to these things?

Walter Bruggeman says that the prophetic task of the church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion to grieve in a society that practices denial and to express hope in a society that lives in despair. Paul reminds us in Romans 5 that we have hope because of Jesus Christ. And even though he has a somewhat problematic formulation that we boast in our afflictions. I simply don't believe that we celebrate suffering or that suffering sanctifies us in any particular way. I believe that the power of our hope comes in understanding and recognizing that the love of God is revealed through Jesus Christ and the power that we have through the Holy Spirit helps us to overcome and survive and to transform the world because of our ability to transform affliction and suffering into hope and flourishing.

God can empower. God will empower. Jesus has given us the charge. He has said that he came to give us life that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Jesus claimed that ministry from Isaiah 61 to preach the good news to the poor to set liberty those who are captive, to bind up the brokenhearted, to tell the truth, to grieve and make space when there is denial all around us, to express hope in a society that lives in despair to bind up the brokenhearted to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. We have hope because of Jesus. We have hope because of the power of the Holy Spirit and so when there's so much going on friends let us remember that we are God's people in the sheep of his pasture.

Let us remember that God loves us. That God has called us to flourish. That God has called us to overcome. That God has called us to be those prophetic witnesses to not only name but create an alternative society to this society that denies grief, this society that lives in illusion, this society that wallows in despair. May the God of limitless love, may the power of the Holy Spirit and may the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ give us all that we need to do the work to



create a world in which all humanity and creation flourishes. It is possible because of Christ, may it be so. Remember Disciples, God loves you so very much and so do I. Amen.