

Do Something

Written by Matthew West •

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I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now, thought
How'd we ever get so far down, and
How's it ever gonna turn around
So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"
Well, I just couldn't bear the thought of
People living in poverty
Children sold into slavery
The thought disgusted me
So, I shook my fist at Heaven
Said, "God, why don't You do something?"
He said, "I did, yeah, I created you" (now listen)

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something, yeah
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
Oh, it's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

I'm so tired of talking about
How we are God's hands and feet
But it's easier to say than to be
Live like angels of apathy who tell ourselves
It's alright, "somebody else will do something"
Well, I don't know about you
But I'm sick and tired of life with no desire
I don't want a flame, I want a fire and
I wanna be the one who stands up and says
"I'm gonna do something"

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something,
yes it is, come on
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
Oh oh, it's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

We are the salt of the earth
We are a city on a hill
We're never gonna change the world
By standing still

No, we won't stand still
No, we won't stand still
No, we won't stand still
No

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now
It's time for us to do something
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
It's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

This song has profoundly spoken for the last five years in my life. It keeps coming forth when there are moments that are challenging or moments in the life of society that are doubly difficult to swallow and experience.

We have been given the gifts of the Spirit to call out the evil, hatred, and the unjust ways of this world...yet we are sometimes fearful to speak up (or at least I can be). With these gifts we are to do something for the good... do something for the sake of the neighbor... do something so reformation can happen in the lives of those who live in darkness.

In 1999, I was a visitor of Dachau Concentration Camp in Southern Germany. I can attest as soon as you drive under the entrance gate, there is a feeling of deep melancholy and an eerie gloom that transcends over your whole body. Evil took place on that ground. At the end of your time when you think you cannot take in anymore...you ask the question "where is the hope found?", you read the following words "NEVER AGAIN."

Never again...
we won't stand still..
we have to do something.

At the beginning of summer, on the Synod Mission Trip we started our journey together at the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation. If you have not had a chance to go to this center, please take time to do so when you are in Tulsa. After an overview of why the center exists (which is quite powerful and moving to tears), the guide asked us whether or not we would commit to living a life of justice where racism would not rule. Our resounding response was 'Yes, we will commit.'

Never again...
we won't stand still..
we have to do something.

Do you know that the Women of the ELCA are a strong force of equality and justice in the church? At the July Triennial in Minneapolis, the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee (a Liberian Lutheran) spoke these words, "In whose corner are we being called to stand?.....God calls us to align with people who are in need, in crisis, in need of love and grace." Multiple speakers continued to speak out on the commitment of showing love, justice, and peace. Look up the ministry and action section on the website of the Women of the ELCA to join in making a difference in the world.

Never again...
we won't stand still..
we have to do something.

I had the opportunity to attend the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta in August. This

Center is packed full of ways our society has not committed to just and courteous practices for all peoples. As most of you who are reading this article know.... I did not live in the era where MLK Jr preached (He was a preacher of the Word of God). What I have learned about this time in our US history is from history books. History books do not do justice to the real life experience of that time where there was a lack of compassion for people different than our ourselves.

One of the keynote speakers of the gathering, Dr. James A. Forbes Jr (an 82 year old theologian from the American Baptist Convention) spoke thus, "We must die to our skin colors and be living sacrifices for the Lord." (based on the Romans 12:1 passage: Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. NIV).

Die to our skin colors...
Be living sacrifices for the Lord...

As The Message Bible by Eugene Peterson states: So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life - and place it before God as an offering. (Romans 12:1)

Place our life before God as an offering...

With the recent events of threats from North Korea and the uprising of the White Supremacists /Neo-Nazis/KKK/and Hate groups.

With the killing of police officers and the rise of drugs overdoses and violence.

We place our lives before God as an offering stating:

Never again...

we won't stand still..

We have to do something.

What is God calling us to do?

(maybe you have seen the following words on the wall across the hallway from my office)

We are Growing in God's Grace (our mission statement)

As disciples we are called to:

Live among God's faithful people

Hear the words of God and share in the Lord's Supper

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

Serve all people following the example of Jesus

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

The above action statements are what we said yes to when we were baptized in Christ and what we affirm when we are confirmed in Christ. These statements guide us to be faithful followers of a Loving God. The God who calls us to love one another as God is love. (John 3:16-17)

September and October are months we are going to hear about reformation. We will be speaking up for justice, peace, and love! We will be writing Thank you's for our police officers, firefighters, emt's, military and service personnel. We will highlight ministries of our community of faith on Rally Day. We will learn about the ministries of the AR-OK Synod.

We will thank all of the volunteers of our congregation. We will explore the ministries of the global church. We will support the Oaks Indian Mission. We will uplift Bread for the World. We will join with the church throughout the world in remembering the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with a celebration.

We will commit to being a Vital Congregation by:

- 1. Strengthening our relationship with God*
- 2. Nurturing relationships*
- 3. Having a strong presence in our community*

It's time for us to do something!!!

Peace,

Pastor Melissa



Prayers for our journey to do something:

We pray that God's Spirit of justice, peace and reconciliation will turn the hearts and minds of nations, leaders and factions to peaceful means of resolving conflicts and wars, and rebuilding communities and nations. Amen.

Gracious and holy God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God knows us and knows our ways and yet shows us mercy and love. We pray that our actions, words and ventures speak clearly of God's love and presence that others may also know this good news. Amen.