



MAY 2015

KEPT SAFE THROUGH DEATH: A MEDITATION ON PSALM 34

BY KATHY KELLER

“Write what you know” is an ancient maxim. For the last eleven months I’ve known anxiety, fear, emergency plane rides, surgery, more surgery, emergency surgery, more emergency surgery, infection, infections that occurred while on antibiotics from the previous infection, non-healing surgical wounds, more surgery, and, not least in my litany of self-pity, twice daily dressing changes for wounds that will not go away.

In all of this God has been at work, encouraging me to “Run with perseverance the race set before me” (Hebrews

12:1). If I can glorify him before so great a cloud of witnesses (mostly unseen), then I feel privileged to be given that assignment. But there has been a longing for it to come to an end, as well. Never before have I so fully understood the passion behind the twin prayers “Let this cup pass from me” and “Thy will be done.”

Since being hospitalized most of the month of October, and continuing on, I have been reading and re-reading the Psalms. There is one psalm that I picked to memorize, Psalm 34.

It was kind of a no-brainer. Psalm 34:3 is the verse Tim and I chose to have engraved inside our wedding rings, over 40 years ago. “Glorify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together” sounds like a nice verse for two people getting married and going into ministry together.

Memorization is a great way to meditate on a piece of scripture. You taste the words, you see the connections, you ask “why that, why here?” about a word, a phrase, that you might have otherwise have read right over and not given much thought

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EASTER STORIES OF HOPE FROM HOPE FOR NEW YORK

Last month we celebrated Easter Sunday with some incredible stories of life changes, including testimonies from some of the men and women who have experienced life changes through Hope for New York’s affiliate programs.

For us at HFNY, it’s been amazing to hear story after story of how the Holy Spirit

is working to make new creations all over our city through the work of our partner organizations. Because you likely only got to hear one HFNY testimony on Easter Sunday, we wanted you to get at least a taste of the other stories, which we’ve excerpted on page 2.

We’re so grateful to you for joining God’s work of trans-

formation in the lives of our neighbors as donors, volunteers, and friends. Thank you especially to those who gave to our Easter Sacrificial Offering, which will help make possible more stories of freedom, restoration, and transformation as we continue to love and serve our neighbors across the city!

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Dina

Brooklyn Teen Challenge

Today I am learning to be confident in who I am in Christ. I know that I'm never alone. I've learned how to find my worth in Jesus Christ and now I strongly desire to help other people especially people who suffer from addiction and abuse.

Antone

NYC Rescue Mission

I thank God that when I fell down, I didn't have to stay there. My vision for my future is having a full-time, steady job, my own apartment or house, a wife and kids, and a fulfilling life with God in charge. I thank God today for allowing me to go through all the stuff I had to go through because it has helped me to realize now that I need Him more and more every day.

Crystal

The Bowery Mission Women's Center

Being at The Bowery Mission has not only helped me in my struggles, it has also helped me to find God's purpose for my life: to help others as I was helped, and to give of myself out of what was freely given to

me. For those who are struggling at this time, be encouraged. If he did it for me, he can and will do it for you.

Josh

Brooklyn Teen Challenge

God has done so much more than just deliver me of my addiction. He has worked in me and is continuing to develop Christ-like character qualities in me. Before, all I knew how to do was fight, run and hurt everyone around me. God has since taught me to show His love. He's burdened my heart with the needs of others, and God has even allowed me to be a leader amongst my brothers in the program. The fact that people look up to me and ask me for advice after all I've done brings me to tears.

Derrick

NYC Rescue Mission

When I accepted Jesus Christ, I became a new creation. When I think of my old nature, it was natural for me to serve and please myself. The same God I disobeyed and turned from is the same God who gave me a new heart. The ultimate grace! Only God is capable of doing such

a thing. By the grace of God, I received a new heart.

Shantae

Young Life

I dedicated my life to Christ at Young Life camp, and now I am experiencing His love for me, that never goes away and never runs out. Before I knew Christ, I was lost, misguided and searching for love but now, because I have experienced his love and forgiveness, I am not perfect but I am more content and reliant on Him.

Edna

The Bowery Mission Women's Center

I am no longer the same Edna that walked through those red doors seven months ago. I was bitter and was broken but now I am filled with love and life. I no longer carry the hurt and anger I felt towards those who used and mistreated me. Jesus has healed my unforgiving heart and my brokenness and filled it with courage, confidence and hope in him.

To learn more about Hope for New York's work and their 40+ non-profit affiliates throughout the city, visit hfnj.org.

REDEEMER REPORT

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Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30/11:30 a.m., 5 & 7 p.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

CHOREOGRAPHERS CHOSEN FOR CFW'S ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

The Center for Faith & Work is pleased to announce our Spring 2015 Artists-in-Residence: choreographers Miro Magloire and Andrew Nemr.

The two artists were chosen from invited proposals that explored the idea of “Friction.” Each resident artist is now in the process of creating a brand new work on that theme, as it’s uniquely expressed through dance. The commissioned works will be performed in May and June.

Lauded as “refreshingly original” by Alastair Macaulay of *The New York Times*, choreographer

Miro Magloire is the founder and artistic director of New Chamber Ballet. Born in Munich, Germany, Magloire started his career as a composer. After relocating to New York and studying Modern Dance at the Ailey and Martha Graham Schools, he turned his attention to choreography and in 2004 he founded New Chamber Ballet.

Magloire has created over 60 ballets in his signature style, all distinguished by sweeping elegance, a striking theatricality, and bold musical choices.

The subject of a 2008 full-page profile in the Sunday *New York Times*, he recently received an O’Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation Grant. Miro’s commissioned piece will be performed as part of New Chamber Ballet’s June 2015 season at City Center Studios in midtown Manhattan.



Andrew Nemr

Mentored by Gregory Hines, **Andrew Nemr** is considered one of the most diverse tap dance artists today. Artistic director of *Cats Paying Dues* and co-founder of the Tap Legacy™ Foundation, Inc., Nemr has garnered a reputation for impeccable storytelling, musicianship and sensitivity, and respect for the craft that he loves. He is the recipient of a 2012 TED Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpieces: Dance Initiative Grant, a CUNY Dance Initiative grant, and is the Artist in

Residence of the Quarterly Arts Soiree at Webster Hall.

An internationally recognized performer and educator, Nemr has performed alongside the likes of Nat Adderley, Jr., Jon Batiste and Stay Human, Harry Connick Jr., the Duke Ellington Orchestra, the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, and the legendary Les Paul.

Nemr appears on the Grammy nominated recording “Itsbyenne Reel” by Dave Eggar, the DVD Documentary and companion album “Tuesdays at Mona’s” by Mona’s Hot Four, and as narrator of DanceTime Publications’ first tap

dance DVD, *Tap Dance History: From Vaudeville to Film*. He has also spoken at numerous TEDx events (TEDxCERN, TEDxPuraVida, TEDxSeton-Hall, etc.) and has his own TED ED Lesson on tap dance.

Nemr’s commissioned piece, *Enter the Waters*, is a 20 minute suite that is expected to premiere at *Cats Paying Dues* 10th Anniversary Celebration, May 13-17, at Tribeca Performing Arts Center.

In practice of arts patronage, the Center for Faith & Work’s

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CHOREOGRAPHERS CHOSEN ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)



Miro Magloire

artist-in-residence program has a two-fold purpose: to support emerging and established local artists through the commissioning of new work, and to celebrate and contribute to the intrinsic value of the arts as a vital fabric of the city. Being devoted to the flourishing of all New York City, the Center for Faith & Work is proud to offer selected resident artists the opportunity, resources, financing, and support to create works of art that contribute to the excellence of New York's rich and creative culture.

KEPT SAFE THROUGH DEATH ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

to. So as I have been trying to memorize Psalm 34 there are a few things I've noticed.

First, the sufferings of the psalmist are meant to be an encouragement to other afflicted people. When he sought God during periods of anxiety and fear (v. 4-10) God relieved him, saved him out of all his troubles, protected him, to the point he can say "he lacked nothing." This theme is continued in vv 17-20, where it sounds as if the psalmist is giving us a blanket promise that God will always deliver us from our troubles, comfort us when we are crushed and brokenhearted, and protect us from harm.

But wait. Verse 20, where the psalmist says "he (God) will protect all his bones, not one

of them will be broken" is a messianic prophecy. It is quoted in John's gospel account of the crucifixion of Jesus, when the soldiers refrained from breaking Jesus' legs to hasten his death, because he was already dead. John says in 19:36 "These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken.'"

My reaction at noticing this was at first bewilderment. Well, yes, none of his bones got broken, but he *did* get crucified! That kind of doesn't count as being protected from anything bad in my book. But when it comes to my understanding vs. scripture, I know there is always something lacking in my understanding. Jesus' bones

weren't broken, but he died a painful, hideous death. God didn't save him from that. But God's protection of Jesus extended *past* the grave. He was raised from the dead.

Follow the thread, Kathy, follow the thought. While God may not protect you from every bad thing that might, has, or could happen to you, ultimately, through resurrection, you are safe. I will walk through death and come out on the other side fully healed, restored, saved and protected. God does not protect us from things that harm us, he protects us as we go through them, to the other side of the resurrection, where our real hopes and happiness lie. Now there's a thought I can cling to.

JESUS OUTSIDE THE LINES BY SCOTT SAULS: A BOOK REVIEW

BY AARON BJERKE

In a recent op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, columnist Nicholas Kristof acknowledged that society often unfairly caricatures Christians as “rubes,” noting that in society “evangelicals constitute one of the few groups that it’s safe to mock openly.” And yet a disproportionate number of aid workers he has met have been Christians. He noted, however, that “rube” is not always an unwarranted label, citing evangelical leaders who blame “9/11 on feminists, gays and lesbians, and doctors who perform abortions.” It is statements like this, made by Christians, that show Christianity to be hostile toward the culture and one another. This, however, begs the question: to what extent is this caricature true?

In *Jesus Outside the Lines*, Scott Sauls, senior pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville, shows that this does not need to be the reality in the church, nor the culture’s perception of it. His thesis is that because Christians focus on their differences and spend an inordinate amount of time in polarizing discussions, rather than also discussing what they are for, the community itself becomes known by only what it is against, which creates a misperception of the Christian

faith and Jesus himself. As Sauls points out time and again, Jesus lived a life that does not fit neatly into any single denomination, theological system, or political party. And if Christians are to be “conformed to the image of Jesus” (Romans 8:29), then they must assume that their life experiences are not exhaustive and their faith has room to grow. In practice, this means that Christians with different perspectives should be able to draw from the unifying love of Jesus in order to humbly listen to one another and destroy the “us vs. them” mentality so that they can navigate difficult conflicts together. In so doing, they will accurately portray God’s love to those around them.

One of the most admirable qualities of the book is that Sauls models this humble posture in his writing. *Jesus Outside the Lines* is not a book that “Bible-thumps” other Christians. He does not preach to the reader; rather, he preaches to himself — the best kind of preaching — and the reader is given intimate access to his thought processes. One example of this humility is his navigation through the apparent conflict between personal faith and institutional religion. There is a feeling that a person

does not need the church in order to grow in one’s faith and to have spiritual discussions. Sauls explains that personal faith and church do not need to be at odds with each other. In this chapter, which alone is worth the price of the book, he shows that the Christian community and the individual need one another. Loving difficult people is Christlike, but it only happens when someone commits to Christian community. Moreover, the community, because of its imperfections, needs individual Christians in order to become more loving and genuine.

Is the church an institution of rubes? Hopefully not, but without the willingness to grow and dialogue with the “other side,” this perception will always be more accurate than it is wrong, and the church will fail in loving others well. Sauls invites the reader, whether a Christian or a friend of one, to be compelled by the Jesus of the Bible rather than by the Jesus of one’s own denomination, theological position, or political party. What the reader will find is that the Jesus of the Bible is infinitely more complex than the political and theological boundaries that the church has attempted to draw around him, and yet he is surprisingly simple.



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