

“To speak of God’s deliverance, for me, invokes the broad scope of our earthly predicament. Deliverance helps us remember that God is the solution to the captivity to evil, injustice, and death that humanity experiences. God is active, present, and intervening in the midst of the crushing poverty that people are experiencing, even right now. God is present through the cycles of violence from which refugees are fleeing and that produce over thirty thousand American deaths from gun violence each year. God has not abandoned people locked up in oppressive cages but rather shows up for the most vulnerable of our human siblings who have been treated in inhumane ways. God is with the oppressed, the poor, the young people caught in vortexes of deprivation, and those with mental and physical disabilities who are stigmatized and vulnerable.

God's delivering presence is a force that we can join. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, our revolutionary Messiah came and lived, and has overcome the cross and the powers that deteriorate our human condition. Jesus has broken into our house of captivity tying up 'the strong man' and stealing us away into God's kingdom (see Mark 3:27). We are delivered from ourselves, from the exploitation of others, and from the unjust structures and institutions that deny the dignity of all human people. Our revolutionary Messiah is overcoming sin, death, and the evil that keep us captive. Deliverance is what we need from the sin, death, and evil that wreak havoc on humanity and the rest of creation."

- From *Who Will Be a Witness* by Drew G.I. Hart

“Israel has given the nations two archetypal images of liberation: the exodus and sabbath. The exodus from slavery into the land of liberty is the symbol of external freedom[...]the sabbath is the symbol of inner liberty[...]No political, social and economic exodus from oppression[...]really leads to the liberty of a humane world without sabbath[...]But the reverse is also true: men and women never find the peace of the sabbath in God’s presence unless they find liberation from dependency and repression, inhumanity and godlessness. So exodus and sabbath are indivisible” (286).

- From *God in Creation* by Jurgen Moltmann

“The illusion of strength has been and continues to be of major significance to me as a black woman. The one myth that I have had to endure my entire life is that of my supposed birthright to strength. Black women are supposed to be strong -- caretakers, nurturers, healers of other people -- any of the twelve dozen variations of Mammy.”

- From *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman's Journey Through Depression* by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God gave the people all these instructions:

2 “I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.

3 “You must not have any other god but me.

4 “You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. **5** You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. **6** But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.

7 “You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

8 “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9** You have six days each week for your ordinary work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. **11** For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

12 “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13 “You must not murder.

14 “You must not commit adultery.

15 “You must not steal.

16 “You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

17 “You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

“God rested on the seventh day. God did not show up to do more. God absented God’s self from the office. God did not come and check on creation in anxiety to be sure it was all working. God has complete confidence in the fruit-bearing, blessing-generating processes of creation that have been instituted.”

- From *Sabbath as Resistance* by Walter Brueggemann

Genesis 2:2-3

On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done. **3** God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Keep the Sabbath day and treat it as holy, exactly as the Lord your God commanded: **13** Six days you may work and do all your tasks, **14** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Don't do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your oxen or donkeys or any of your animals, or the immigrant who is living among you—so that your male and female servants can rest just like you. **15** Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, but the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That's why the Lord your God commands you to keep the Sabbath day.

Try to practice Sabbath in some form.

“Sabbath concerns the periodic, disciplined, regular disengagement from systems of productivity whereby the world uses people up to exhaustion. That disengagement refers also to culture-produced expectations for frantic leisure, frantic consumption, or frantic exercise.”

- From “Exodus” by Walter Brueggemann in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*

If a few hours is too much right now, start by prioritizing sleep.

“Sleep, in its own way, is an act of trust. We enter into the realm of the unconscious—vulnerable, where we cannot think, work, or wrangle. Even the most devout atheist enters into this act of surrender, this letting go into the night that lets us go into God as the one who sustains us, who keeps watch while we are no longer looking at our watches. And with or without our cooperation, when we sleep, God is at work to heal and restore what has been lost in the day’s eternal battle with the sea [chaos]. We take leave of the world we know to enter a world we do not know as well, and we are held.”

- From *How To Survive a Shipwreck* by Jonathan Martin

Sponsor a system of rest.