



FAITH IN THE STREETS

**A Devotional for Holy
Troublemakers, Justice-Warriors,
and Arc Benders**

June 2026

DEDICATION

Greetings!

To all the **Holy Troublemakers**,
Justice-Warriors, and **Arc Benders**,
who feel called to do something
in an age of cruelty –

This devotional is for YOU. In the work of holy resistance, it can feel like we are all alone and that all we do for justice does little to change the world. But y'all, what we do matters. Therefore, we must not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. We must do justly today, the Talmud teaches us. No matter how big or small our actions might be, let us be reminded that many small actions can lead to massive change. Margaret Mead reminds us to "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Together, our small actions put together can literally change the world.

We are following in the legacy of those who have lived out their faith by working for justice and compassion. We are walking with our spiritual ancestors who trod the path ahead and are walking with us today and every day. It is their footsteps

that we are walking by putting **feet to our faith** in the streets doing the work of justice too.

We are among the holy troublemakers, the justice-seekers, and the arc benders, who have been leading us in the path of compassion, justice, and peace.

We are among those whose faith led them beyond the walls of the church to live out their **faith in the streets** and in the halls of power and in the resistance movement.

We are among those who took seriously the call to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. It was Jesus whose ministry led him **to the streets** and to the margins.

Y'all this is hard and holy work. But take courage friends, in the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: "we shall overcome because the arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Let us be the arc benders, holy troublemakers, and justice warriors today and all the days to come.

Abundant Blessings,
Rev. Hope Schwartz

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GOOD TROUBLE IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Jm. 2:14-17)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

Message

It was John Lewis who told us to "never be afraid to get into good trouble." Good trouble is what faith looks like in action. James the Apostle encourages us to get into some good trouble too, as an expression and embodiment of our faith. He insists that a faith without action is no faith at all. Without deeds, our faith is lifeless and dead. We must show what we believe in deeds, not simply say it with speech.

Living out our faith inevitably leads us into good trouble. It was Jesus who challenged the systems and structures of injustice that hurt and harm the powerless and marginalized in society. Because of this, following in the ways of Jesus

demands that we do something about the injustices and inequities in the world too. Cornel West tells us that “justice is what love looks like in public.” Indeed, we are to work for justice for it is an expression of our love for God and love for our neighbors.

We cannot simply do nothing, for Desmond Tutu reminds us that “if we are neutral in situations of injustice, we have chosen the side of the oppressor.” And Jesus was not on the side of the oppressor but was on the side of the oppressed and impoverished. Let us be like Jesus and choose the side of the oppressed.

Instead of doing nothing, we must do whatever it takes to create a more just world. Y’all, injustice does not disappear on its own, it is interwoven within the systems and structures of our society. Injustice is insidious, and is a threat to justice everywhere, for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminds us that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Should we do nothing, injustice will prevail.

Prayer

O God of Good Trouble, you call us to get into good trouble. Give us courage to get into good trouble today and every day. Let us get into good trouble until the day justice for all is found. With your help, O God, we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Action

Opportunities abound for us to live out our faith and get into some good trouble. Write to your legislators today to make your voice heard. Create a protest sign and join your local rally! Gather resources to support those in need within your community. Whatever you do, get into some good trouble today!



RESISTANCE IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Ex. 1:8-10,12, 15-16)

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land."¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.

Message

Resistance is a natural faith response to inequity and injustice. For whenever injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty, as our ancestors have said many years ago. Wherever injustice is present, people of faith must resist.

And this shows up as a faithful response to injustice in the first chapter of Exodus. It was the midwives Shiphrah and Puah who resisted the unjust and inhumane orders, decrees,

and laws of Egypt to save the lives of babies. And the text tells us that the midwives resisted the unjust laws because of their faith. Because of their faith! It was because of their faith, y'all!

The midwives used their wisdom to resist the unjust laws and save lives. The work of resistance can take many forms, but at the heart of this work is the unwillingness to cooperate with injustice. It is the tactic of oppressive empires to legislate injustice and inequity, as the law of the land. Yet, legislating injustice is antithetical to the ways of God.

In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Shiphrah and Puah "did not simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, instead they drove a spoke into the wheel itself" by choosing to resist the legislation of infanticide. Compliance with injustice leads us farther and farther and farther away from God's dream for this world. We must act in resistance to all that is wrong in the world around us.

Prayer

O God of Resistance, it is you who has called us to resist evil and injustice whenever and wherever it is. Make us courageous and cunning like Shiphrah and Puah in our work of resistance. With your help, O God we can! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Action

We are called to resist injustice. Get involved with an organization or group that is already doing the work of justice, like Indivisible or Stand Up Lockport or Compassion Not Cruelty or Buffalo United Coalition. Let us put a spoke in the wheels of injustice in our world!



PROTESTING TOGETHER IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Rom. 12:1-2)

¹ I appeal to you therefore, siblings in Christ, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Message

Protest is an act of worship, Church. Paul the Apostle makes a radical statement when he says to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to be transformed. This is an act of worship. Because worship transforms us in the ways of Jesus, it does not conform to the ways of the world. Instead, worship stands in opposition to the ways of the world. Worship is a protest of the ways of the world that conflict with the ways of God.

Protest is and has been a faithful response of resistance to injustice in our world. This means that our refusal to

conform to injustice and to idolatry and to inhumanity is itself protest. Elie Wiesel reminds us that “there may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.” Protest is a non-negotiable act of faith in the ways of God.

But Church, protesting in the streets as a public demonstration is not the only way to protest. Whenever we pray together, we engage in protest! Whenever we hear a sermon and put it into practice, we engage in protest! Whenever we feed the hungry, we engage in protest! Protesting is how we live out our faith in this world, Church. Protest is everything we do towards God’s will being done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Prayer

Ours is a God of Protest. It is God who has called us to not conform to this world but to be transformed. Because of this, worship is about transformation as protest is about transformation.

Action

Let us not conform to the ways of the world but be transformed by God. To do this, look at the world around you. Are all things in this world transformed by God yet? If not, we’ve got work to do, y’all! Get involved in clean air initiatives, protest the development of AI data centers in disadvantaged places (and everywhere else). Pray the Lord’s Prayer so that God’s will be done on earth . . . as it is in heaven.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

SPEAKING IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Ex. 3:7-12)

⁷ Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Message

Our voices matter, y'all!! Our voices have power to change this world. Even if our voices shake, we must still speak. Maggie Kuhn reminds us that speaking is a powerful act of resistance. Speaking truth to power is an act of resistance to

the vagrant and violent misuse and abuse of power in our world. Maggie Kuhn encourages us “to speak our minds, even if our voice shakes.”

This was what God had called Moses to do too. God sent Moses to speak truth to power to the king of Egypt. But Moses was terrified to do so, insisting that he did not have the right words. But because God called him to it, God would see him through it. In this way, God had given him the words to say to Pharaoh – let my people go! This is a call to set the people free from their enslavement in Egypt. It is a call that echoes throughout the centuries for freedom from all bondage, freedom from all that holds us back, and freedom from all that holds us captive. Speaking truth to power is always about liberation.

But never forget this, Church. The promise made to Moses is a promise made to all who speak truth to power. God told Moses that God would go with him to Pharaoh. We are not alone in this holy work of resistance. Thanks be to God!

Prayer

O Still Speaking God, it is you who calls us to speak up and speak out against violence and injustice and oppression wherever and whenever it shows up. Be with us, O God as we speak truth to power. Give us the right words to say, so that liberation is possible. Amen.

Action

We are called to speak. Speaking truth to power might look like writing to our legislators or drafting a statement of witness or expressing our thoughts in an op-ed in the newspaper. Contact your representatives to talk to them about the injustices happening in our society. Create protest signs that speak truth to power. Speak up, whatever you do!



MARCHING TOGETHER IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Josh. 6:1-7)

¹ Now Jericho was shut up inside and out because of the Israelites; no one came out, and no one went in. ² The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have handed Jericho over to you, along with its king and soldiers. ³ You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. Thus you shall do for six days, ⁴ with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead." ⁶ So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and have seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark of the LORD." ⁷ To the people he said, "Go forward and march around the city; have the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD."

Message

Marching is a faith-filled response that breaks down the walls of injustice and inequity. Our history reminds us that

marching has served as a form of resistance in the work of justice. From the Civil Rights Movements of the 20th century, the Women's March, and the No Kings Rallies of 2025 and 2026. Marching has literally brought down the walls of inequality that held many captive.

It was God who delivered our spiritual ancestors from enslavement in Egypt into the wilderness and from the wilderness to the Promised Land. Just like it is in modern day marches, our spiritual ancestors brought down the walls of the empire by marching. It was a divine mandate, God told them to march around the city. Because they did, the walls of the city had come down. The foundations of the city shook, the walls of the city shook, and the souls of the people were shook.

All they did was march; there was no use of violence. Through marching, our spiritual ancestors were able to overcome the empire, so that they could settle in the land. In faith, they marched. In faith, they overcame. In faith, they won the battle.

Prayer

Ours is a God who goes before us. March ahead of us, O God as we take to the streets. March alongside us, so that we know we are not alone. March behind us, so that you can steer us in the direction to go. We march, O God because we know that you are with us in the work of justice. Amen.

Action

Put on your walking shoes, Church. Tie those laces. Grab some water. Put feet to your faith today and march for justice wherever you can!



CHANTING IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Josh. 6:15-17, 20)

¹⁵ On the seventh day they rose early, at dawn, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. ¹⁷ The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. ²⁰ So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the trumpets, they raised a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so the people charged straight ahead into the city and captured it.

Message

It was Ruth Bader Ginsburg who reminded us of the power of our voices. She said, "if your voice had no power, they wouldn't be trying to silence you." Chanting is a noise-making form of resistance to the injustices of our world. In raising a collective voice in resistance, chanting is a powerful force. As a community, chanting against injustices makes our voices and message louder and louder and louder.

Chanting is a way of speaking out against injustice and inequity, a way of speaking up for those oppressed, and a way of speaking out a new vision for a more just world. Some common chants on the frontline of protests and marches go like this:

No justice, no peace.

**What do we want? Justice!
When do we want it? Now!**

Love not hate, makes America great!

Chanting is a vehicle of resistance in the work of justice. On their way into the Promised Land, Joshua invited our spiritual ancestors to get loud, to make some noise, and to shout to topple the walls of the empire. It was not with weapons or violence that the people overcame the empire, it was through the volume of their chanting and shouting and marching!

Prayer

O Noise-Making God, it is you who invites us to shout and chant in resistance to all the injustice around us. Draw our voices together, so that we can find common ground and a common voice. Give us the boldness to shout out loud and not be afraid to make some noise for justice. Amen.

Action

Speak up, y'all! Make some noise for justice today. Whether it is using a whistle to aid our immigrant neighbors or it is having a conversation about an injustice that troubles your soul or it is singing resistance songs with the Resistance Singers. Use your voice, today and tomorrow and all the days to come!



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN THE STREETS

Bible Passage (Dan. 3:6-12)

⁶ Anyone who does not bow down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” ⁷ And so, as soon as they heard the sound of the instruments, the people of all the nations, races, and languages bowed down and worshiped the gold statue which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁸ It was then that some Babylonians took the opportunity to denounce the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “May Your Majesty live forever! ¹⁰ Your Majesty has issued an order that as soon as the music starts, everyone is to bow down and worship the gold statue, ¹¹ and that anyone who does not bow down and worship it is to be thrown into a blazing furnace. ¹² There are some Jews whom you put in charge of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who are disobeying Your Majesty's orders. They do not worship your god or bow down to the statue you set up.”

Message

One of the first commandments God had given to our spiritual ancestors and to us was to not worship anyone or anything other than God. This means we must not worship

or pledge allegiance to any other being – human or nonhuman – for we are to be God’s people and God’s alone. Should there ever come a time when a person or party demands our worship, it is idolatry. It can show up in the demand of allegiance, or face alienation; loyalty or face the demand to leave; compliance, or face retribution.

Our spiritual ancestors Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were all too familiar with how the empire demands loyalty and allegiance to the empire over and against worship of God. As captives living in the Babylonian Empire, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were subject to the demands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. An imperial decree demanded that all living in Babylon bow down to worship King Nebuchadnezzar. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were forced to make a choice: compliance or civil disobedience. This is the heart of civil disobedience; breaking the law when it is unjust and inequity become the law of the land.

Civil disobedience has been an effective response to injustice. It was God who told us what the purpose of government is: to reward the good and punish the bad. But what happens when our leaders choose to legislate (put into law) policies and practices that reward the bad and punish the good? We must resist. And this shows up in acts of civil disobedience.

Disobeying the commands of King Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace. Civil disobedience risks punishment for the sake of what is right and what is just and what is good. Our spiritual ancestors in the Civil Rights Movement engaged in civil disobedience, and it led to their arrest, imprisonment, and even death at times. Even so, we find that God meets us

there too. God is with us in whatever fiery furnace we are thrown into because of our fight for what is right. God is with us, even in the fire.

Prayer

O God of Justice, you call us to do what is right and do what is just. When injustice and idolatry and inequity become law, give us the courage to engage in civil disobedience. We know you are with us in whatever fiery furnace we end up in when we fight for what is right. Amen.

Action

Let us not concede or comply with injustice and inequity without a fight. This might look like protesting or occupation of a designated area (think Occupy Wall Street or the 2023 college student occupation of buildings and tenting against military operations in Gaza) or intentional breaking of laws (think civil rights movement sit-ins at whites only businesses). Whatever you do, get into good trouble in the fight for what is right!