

Key Insights for Christian Discipleship @ Jazz Evensong

Week 7 - Oct 18, 2017

Thank God I Am Free at Last

Exodus 20:2-3 *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.*

“Jazz really is about freedom – the freedom of the human spirit.”
There’s a You Tube clip in which Herbie Hancock says those words.
That sentiment resonates so deeply in my soul.

To be free from abuse, from guilt, from depression, from despair, from death.
Those longings, I suspect, touch a chord with most, if not all, of us.

To be free for compassion, for prosperity, for safety, for health, for flourishing.
Those aspirations, I suspect, also touch a chord with most, if not all, of us.

Jazz traces its roots back to Black Gospel music in the US.
And Black Gospel music can trace its roots
back to the deep rhythms of Africa.

In Black Gospel, those rhythms pick up the story of freedom
found in the freeing of Israel from slavery in Egypt.
It’s a freeing that touches every dimension of human life –
the personal, the communal, and the cosmic.

As individuals, we are freed to be who God made us to be.
No power in the cosmos has a claim to our ultimate loyalty
other than our loving Creator.

We may desperately chase after what appear to be sources of worth,
but in the end only accepting the reconciliation with our Maker
brings the freedom for which we long deep in our soul.

As communities, we are freed to live in mutual respect and responsibility.
That is how God created us to be –
doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our Creator.

And as a cosmos, we are designed to fit together and work together.
It’s a providential system in which every instrument has a part.
The sum of those parts is beyond anything we can do alone.
There is a flow among those parts that transcends anything they imagined.

But life, like jazz, is not unstructured, unfettered freedom.
That simply produces a callous and confusing chaos.

The freedom that jazz respects and that the God of the Exodus offers
is a freedom that is constrained by laughter and love.
It operates most fully within the bounds of that God’s delight and compassion.

Listen for that freedom as we continue with our music this evening.