



## Wednesday Prayer

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – Power to the faint and strength to the powerless

**<sup>21</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? <sup>22</sup>It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in;**

**<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. <sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup>but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.**

**Isaiah 40:21-22, 29-31**

This image of God sitting above the circle of the earth, stretching out the heavens like a curtain, is delivered to the weary, defeated Israelites exiled from Babylon. A message of hope and trust in the power of God the creator, the beginning and the foundation. The powerless, faint, and exhausted – all those waiting for the Lord – can wait in hope as God acts through us and provides strength.

We are entering Black History Month, a time to honor and celebrate the significant and often neglected contributions of Black Americans throughout our history. These verses from Isaiah offer an interesting parallel in this context. “Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?” Spirituals were one way enslaved Africans communicated messages to one another while also maintaining hope in God amidst the greatest of suffering. Frederick Douglass described spirituals as:

*“a tale which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones, loud, long and deep, breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains...”<sup>1</sup>*

Many of us have not known, have not heard, have not been told the full truth of our history. This continues to seriously impact our Black and Brown siblings through all the ways our structures, systems and beliefs are centered around dominant white culture. Racism and oppression are embedded and perpetuated in human trafficking. Begin here to learn more [Conducting Anti-Trafficking Work Using a Racial Equity Lens - Love146](#) and join me this month and throughout the year to explore how our work together can take on a racial equity lens.

**God, you give power to the faint and strength to the powerless. Open our hearts and minds to how our own actions and inactions contribute to unjust systems. Transform our work to center those who have been marginalized and restore hope to your beloved. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

<sup>1</sup> (1844). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. an American Slave.*