

"I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers." - 2 Tim. 1:3

Paths of Justice

With Jesus or Against Him?

Proverbs 24:11 is a motivational verse of scripture: "Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter." The following verse seems to imply that we're all aware of those who are drawn toward death and stumbling to the slaughter: "If you say, 'Surely we did not know this,' Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?"

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us to "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (basic necessities of life) will be added to you." If we're preoccupied with providing for ourselves what our Father has already promised to provide for us, are we distracted from seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then as a result also distracted from learning to recognize and address the injustices around us?

Jesus says, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters" (Luke 11:23). Considering all these

passages, once we become aware of the kingdom of God and His righteousness, can it be concluded that if we don't take an active role working with Jesus, we take an active role working against Jesus?

Maybe the next time we're challenged with the question, "How can a loving God allow so much suffering?" we could respond, "That seems like a good question, but might it be at least as important to ask how we can join God in His work of healing?" - Tony Ticknor

Interview with Fred Harris

In honor of Independence Day, below is an interview with one of our veterans at Faith Community Church. It has been edited for length and clarity.

Doug Dunsmoor: Could you tell us what branch of the military you served in, and how long you served?

Fred Harris: I served in the United States Marine Corps from 1948 to 1952. I was enlisted for three, and when the Korean conflict came along, I made an extension. I was proud to be in the Marine Corps; I liked the discipline, the purpose, and the values.

Dunsmoor: Thank you for serving in the military, helping to protect the country and maintain our freedoms. Why did you go into the military?

Harris: At the end of the war, you either went to college, got a job in a construction industry, or joined the military. My twin brother joined the Marine Corps. I tried to get into the Air Force, but I could not pass due to ear problems, so I went to the Marine Corps and they were looking for a Few Good Men. I was in the line company as an assistant machine gunner, then I was transferred into a recon

company to work with Navy demolition teams and learn scouting to do special projects to get information. I wound up in a battalion during the Korean War doing the same thing.

Dunsmoor: How long were you in the Korean War?

Harris: One year, from the time we made the Inchon Invasion until I was one of the last men in my company to go because I drew a very high number. I had such an appreciation for the men in World War II because some of them were there 36 months; I only had 12. I was very blessed. You wind up with experiences that make you lean on your faith, and I was so thankful that I became a Christian once I got out of boot camp. It was something I promised myself that I was going to deal with. I had a watch on board a ship for about two hours, and they issued you a New Testament, and I read that enough to recognize that I needed Christ in my life. So I spent about an hour in prayer thanking God and asking Christ to come into my heart. That was my conversion.



Vol. 2, Issue 7, July 2018

Definition of injustice: Injustice occurs when someone with greater power deprives someone with lesser power of freedom, dignity, treasure, or livelihood.

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you." - Ps. 89:14

Interview with Fred Harris - Continued

Dunsmoor: That's interesting, because some people today are trying to get rid of the Bible or any influence like that from the military, and yet it sounds like that was the very thing that helped you change your life to be on the right track and then helped you through what you went through in the military.

Harris: Oh, absolutely. And things happen that really test your faith, and sometimes it's quite an experience to go through, but you realize that God is there. You wonder why things happen – many involved the innocent – the old women, men, children, and the suffering they go through. You even have confrontation and insight into your enemy and experiences that make you question: "Why, why, why?" And when you approach God, it was like the Lord turned aside and said, "You think about it and you'll get your answer." And I did. And it's all because of the hearts of men that lead countries. If they had Christ in their heart – the Christian faith – we most likely would not have wars. War is inevitable in history because of the nature of man. Change the hearts of your leaders, and those that support him, and your government – you have to touch everybody as Christ would have us do.

Dunsmoor: That's powerful. Did you always have the same view of the enemy? Did you ever come face to face with them?

Harris: I had one experience I'll share with you. We had about 25 Chinese prisoners that we had taken captive, and our medics did the best they could because many of them were wounded - they were in shock; the cold – that was one of your biggest enemies. It was about 15 below. As I was in the tent I had a watch on them for about two hours. I saw the faces of those men, their wounds, their suffering, and I realized they're no different than me; they have moms, dads, sisters, brothers, maybe wives and children. And I found out later through information from intelligence units that many of them were illiterate – they were people who worked in the rice fields, and the Chinese came in and said, "You will come, you will be given a uniform and training, and you will go and fight." This is my enemy – they are human beings, and it kind of gets you at times, you feel a real sympathy and sorrow for them. These are things that go with you all your life. You don't think a lot about these things because it's difficult. A lot of people wonder why veterans don't share, and many times it's because they don't want to remember some things. I was lucky – I didn't have anything real bad – but I saw and experienced things that were very hurtful. That's war. You're going to

come out changed, and your Christian faith was the biggest factor that meant so much. When I tried to talk to guys in my squad, they weren't real interested. They hadn't dealt with it, but they're going to have questions. Maybe they were just fearful – they didn't want to face the fact that they might be maimed, they might be killed, and what their faith was going to mean to them. What's so great about this country is the independence we got from our forefathers, George Washington and that group, who fought and rebelled. Has there ever been a nation other than the United States of America that has been willing to put their lives and their people in great danger and harm's way and go to war for the rights and freedoms of other people? I don't know of any. Though people criticize this country, and we've got some things wrong, independence is a great thing and this nation has always tried to fight for the rights of other people, and that's what's meaningful about the 4th of July.

Dunsmoor: How would you describe what it means to be an American?

Harris: It means that you recognize the freedoms and rights you have – you can worship in whatever religion you want, you can speak out, you have a right to pursue an occupation, and a lot of it is because of independence. We hope and pray that our nation's government and our Supreme Court will recognize our Constitution because it is the one thing that our independence was framed on.

Independence is a wonderful thing that we should continue to honor in this country.

Dunsmoor: FCC's Justice Mission has focused on fulfilling God's call to restore justice, which includes bringing about right relationships among human beings with one another and with God. Is there something, whether it's from your military service or just other things you've learned over the years, you could share about what justice is, and how important it is for us as Christians to promote a just society?

Harris: Law is the guideline. We need to enforce and keep the laws. We need to back our law enforcement people – police; when we see people breaking laws, we need to speak up. Without justice, it's like an automobile without wheels – it ain't going to go anywhere, and we need to have that and recognize the value of our Constitution. Hopefully we'll get a Supreme Court who will interpret our Constitution for what it means instead of trying to change it.

Dunsmoor: That would include having a willingness to confine their authority to what's defined in the Constitution so they're not making up law. As an example, in *Roe v. Wade*, scholars of different



Interview with Fred Harris - Continued

persuasions have said they were uncovering something that wasn't really there in the Constitution but making a new law about this idea of abortion rights.

Harris: The abortion thing – there's no question it is just murder. For the Supreme Court to approve it, it's against God's laws. God's laws are necessary, and any laws that go against God's righteousness and God's laws, we need to recognize and speak against.

Dunsmoor: Would that be a way in which Christians in the church have a key role to play with justice to help bring that understanding about God's law and how that works out in society to make things function well?

Harris: On the last day of eighth grade, our teacher, Ms. Drury, said, "I want to thank all of you, I've enjoyed having you through the year. I have two books on my desk. I want you to listen to me." She picked up Webster's Dictionary. She said, "This book is full of knowledge. If you will make it a part of your life, it will help you learn, and it will be a great help to you." She laid it down and picked up the Bible. She said, "This book is the holy Bible. It's designed to give you God's Word and a way to live your life. If you will follow the Christian tenets that are being taught in here and the conduct that you should live by and recognize God in your life, you can live a very peaceful life. You can have problems, but you'll know how you're supposed to live your life." I never forgot that – God bless her. She left quite a legacy and gave money she saved for the high school to give scholarships for young girls that want to be English teachers. It was great.

Dunsmoor: Do you have any advice for a young man graduating from high school and considering the military?

Harris: One thing I would recommend to all young teenagers is to recognize how to treat other people properly and behave with respect. Be aware of what's going on around you. You'll be more inclined to reach

out to people, to help, to have a ministry. And the other one would be to determine what you want to do in life and find out what you have to do to get there. For example, in my Sunday school years ago, I asked if the kids had all the money in the world, what would they do with their life? Many said they'd buy cars, planes, tanks, but one young man said he wanted to be a piano teacher. He went to Ohio State for music, and today he's about 65; he's taught piano all his life. He found out what he wanted to do. Now if you're going into the military, I would suggest as far as getting an education, choose the Air Force. It's tops for education. You can go to college and join the reserve unit, and they will pay for your education. The military will teach you discipline. Give it the best you can, take it to heart, learn as much as you can, and do the best that you can.

Dunsmoor: Thanks for all you've shared. Is there anything else you'd like to share from your experience?

Harris: As the time goes on, you change how you handle things. Life has been good to me, I've been blessed, and my brother once said, "You know, Fred, I think God had His hand on us from the time we were born. If He hadn't, we wouldn't be here, because of things we've been through." I married a woman who was a Christian. I wanted to marry a Christian girl, and boy did I get a good one. I learned a lot from her. I never knew anyone who was a prayer warrior, but that woman was amazing. When you've been with them for many years and they're gone, it's a real loss to you, but you have to move on and do the best you can. I enjoy my daughters and my grandchildren. It's just a good life. You have some time when you struggle with some issues, your health and so forth, but that's all part of it. The good things are yet to come. There are better days ahead.

Dunsmoor: Thanks for your time and your service.

Harris: Thanks for asking me to talk with you – I appreciate that.

Opportunities / Activities

- The women's SOAR survivor group continues through July 30. We are thankful for all of those involved and for God's lovingkindness. Please continue to pray for them for healing, wisdom, and transformation.
- We are considering another SOAR survivor group for women and possibly starting one for men in the next few months. Please let us know if you can help.
- The Walk for Life for PDHC is on July 21. Register here: <http://www.supportpdhc.org/walk-for-life/>.
- On Monday, Aug. 6th at 7:00 pm we will pack lunches at FCC for Nicole Bromley's outreach downtown on Aug. 7th to those at-risk for sex trafficking. Let us know if you can help get the food and/or pack lunches.
- Do you want to get more involved with righting injustice? Come to our Justice Team meetings where prayer happens, plans are made, and investigations continue.
- Check with Tom Castor (tcbus7@att.net) or Doug Dunsmoor (dwdunsmoor@hotmail.com) for more information about these and more opportunities.