



Wisdom from Grandma Thelma

Dear friends, please allow me to share the wisdom of my Grandma Thelma which is still prevalent and profound today. When I was 13, I was coming home when a NARC vehicle ran onto the sidewalk barely, missing me. Two officers jump out the vehicle and started yelling at me.

I raised my hands in surrender, but they slammed me against the car, went into my pockets throwing my contents to the ground. One officer turned me around and said to his partner, “This is not the (n word) that we were looking for!”

He grabbed my face and came close and said, “If you tell anyone about this we will come back to see you. Got it?”

I said yes as they released me and I ran into the house. I was terrified. It was two weeks before I could leave my home on my own. I was hurt, angry and scared.

I decided to write a poem that I shared with my grandmother. The poem went like this:

*Just because Emancipation ended slavery do you think that we are free?
Well, tell me my brothers and sisters, where are we?
We've slaved in this country for your years for humanity
Do you think we have it?
All of the slaving, praying and building from our people and we are still not looked on as
equal.
How can man end this sad thing called tolerance?
Please don't tell me by force or violence!
You can never reach the peak of being free because the peak is just too high
Being free for a black man lies only in the sky!*

My grandmother's response was this, “I experienced your poem as a closed fist. Nothing good coming out and nothing good coming in. Son, open your hand and allow God to do a real work in you.”

She told me that what happened to me should have never happened. However, I must not look at those men as wicked and evil at their core level, but see them as misguided. Since they are misguided they stand in of our prayers.

“Son, are you up for the task of forgiving their offense and praying for those who clearly stand in need of our prayers?”

I cried at the beauty of her truth and grace, and we began to pray. Many of us today are troubled by what happened with the rioting and unrest in Charlottesville.

I implore you as Grandma Thelma beseeched me to see that there are times when humanity can be misguided. The Charlottesville events were one of those times as hate and anger was unleashed in the atmosphere in far-flung, inappropriate ways. Grandma Thelma would say, “Forgive the offense!” And as the body of Christ everything should be brought to God through supplication and prayer.

Philippians 4:6

‘Don't worry about anything, but everything through supplication and prayer, and petition with thanksgiving, let your request be known to God.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Derrick Parson