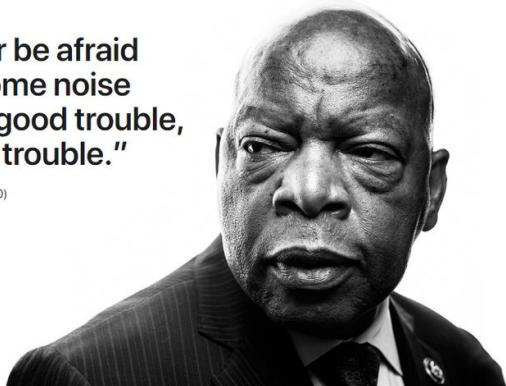


**"Never, ever be afraid
to make some noise
and get in good trouble,
necessary trouble."**

Rep. John Lewis (1940-2020)



"As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Over the weekend America lost a towering icon of the civil rights movement, Congressman John Lewis. He fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. What remains is only the crown of righteousness.

One of my favorite John Lewis quotes is this one: *"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."*

Good trouble. I love that. It appeals to the agitator in me. I don't know how the phrase came to Mr. Lewis, but I'd like to think it was rooted in his childhood, in his desire to become a preacher. It's well known that his Christian faith developed when he was very young and that his relationship with Jesus Christ was grounded in his understanding of scripture. He knew a Jesus who was always getting into "good trouble." The kind of trouble that involved eating with tax collectors and sinners. The kind of trouble that Jesus found when he had compassion for outcasts, when he healed the sick and comforted the dying. The kind of trouble that caused Jesus to command his disciples to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and visit the prisoner. (Matthew 25: 31ff.) The kind of trouble that came from loving the unlovable, touching the untouchable, and bearing with the unbearable. The kind of trouble that threatened the religious leaders so much that they put him to death on a cross. That good trouble ultimately led to our salvation.

What kind of good trouble can we be getting ourselves into these days, that may reflect our commitment to Christ, and God's infinite love for us?

President Obama said this about John Lewis: “*Not many of us live to see our own legacy play out in such a meaningful, remarkable way. John Lewis did. And thanks to him, we now all have our marching orders - to keep believing in the possibility of remaking this country we love until it lives up to its full promise.*”

John Lewis understood that God had his hand in his life, that God had a purpose for his life and he never let that purpose go out of focus. He kept marching on, moving forward, never looking back, not having any regrets, always relying on his faith; all the while building a legacy of love and justice.

At the end of his earthly ministry, just before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave what we call the Great Commission to his disciples: “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

The disciples had a clear purpose. What is God’s purpose for our lives? And make no mistake, each of us DOES have a purpose, a reason for being, something God has entrusted us to do for the sake of the kingdom. Whatever it is, we have to get on with it. Each one of us has the ability to leave a legacy, to make an impact on someone’s life, to change the course of history, to shape the church. And, if we are fortunate enough, we may be allowed to live long enough to witness our legacy begin to unfold.

Rest in peace, John Lewis. You have finished the race; you have left a legacy.

In Christ,

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant John Lewis. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.