

Sermon Outline - Sun, Feb 21st, 2021 – The Dream and the Hope of the Slave – Hush Harbors
(Romans 4:3,16-21 ; Hebrews 11:1-3;12:1)

Overview: This Black history Month our theme has been “The Dream and the Hope of the Slave.” We started by looking at the story of Harriet Tubman, last week we learned about the founder of the AME Church, Richard Allen and this week we will lean into the story of Hush Harbors.

Story Exegesis

- The promise to Abraham isn't only for his family but that all will be blessed through him
- There were attempts by white Christians to create second class citizenship for enslaved Black people and “allow” them to be Christian but deny them the freedom and dignity
- They create a theology that reinforces white supremacy
- But enslaved people read stories like that of Abraham and realized they were included and that God was on the side of justice and liberation
- The Hebrews scripture is an example of how Black folks took the scriptures and created connection with their belief in ancestors and connect it with the Christian tradition
- When Black Christians main option for church was controlled by white Christians, they created another space to worship God.
- Hush harbors were gatherings in the woods where enslaved people would worship together outside of the eye of their slave masters.
- One part of hush harbors was the “ring shout” where slaves gathered in circles where they sang and danced being animated by the Holy Spirit in a way that came from their African

Key Points – God’s Vision Unfolds on Journey

1. **“Official” churches were filtering God through the oppressive politics of the time and hush harbors created a space of freedom from that oppression.** Hush harbors allowed people to connect with God without oppressive theology.
2. **Like the children of Israel they believed that God could be found in the wilderness.** These are God’s true sanctuaries. Jesus goes into the desert, Moses to the mountain because they can find God more clearly, free from the forces of human politics.
3. **Hush harbors created a space where folks could incorporate their cultural traditions and trust that they would could connect with God as their full selves.** The ring shout was just one part of that but it was also in hush harbors that slave revolts were organized.

Core Questions –

1. Christianity has had a long legacy of tension around whether to reject or embrace the practices of other traditions. Where have you found peace with incorporating your cultural traditions or where are you unsure?
2. Hush harbors created space for enslaved people to reject oppressive theologies and create liberatory spaces. Are there theologies that you are struggling with or unpacking. What questions remain?
3. How can our congregation be a hush harbor for so many people who have left the church because of deep trauma or rejection?