

# **FREEDOM WRITERS – YOUR STORY MATTERS**

**July 5, 2020    ser3950    God in the Movies, Pt1**

Good morning Church family. It sure is great to be back together again, isn't it? I am excited to be starting our new series God in the Movies! I chose the movie Freedom Writers. It's a true story about an inner city school teacher who changes the lives of over 140 teenagers.

Have you ever watched a movie and looked at a character in the movie and wished you could be them? Every time I watch this movie I cry. This character isn't rich, she doesn't have superpowers, she doesn't even have a nice house.

But Miss G is a simple schoolteacher who lives out her purpose with great passion and great joy every day! She is changing lives. She is doing exactly what she is created to do; and to me there is nothing better than that. Let's take a look at the trailer of this movie, Freedom Writers.

(Play movie trailer)

“We kill each other over race, pride and respect. We are in a war. We fight for our America!”

Remember those words, we will come back to them.

But first, I want to share with you why I picked this movie and why I cry every time I watch it.

I cry because Miss G took an impossible situation with a group of teenagers who were hopeless. No one gave them a chance because they were filled with bitterness, hate and disrespect and she gave them hope, and it changed their lives forever.

Miss G ministered to these kids by getting a second job to pay for books for them. The school and her fellow teachers didn't feel they were worth getting any good books because they wrote the kids off as not willing to learn. She raised money to take them on field trips and she taught them to read stories about teenagers like themselves, such as the Diary of Anne Frank. She sacrificed for them and at times received nothing in return.

But Miss G showed them they had a story to tell. They mattered. She didn't change the world but she changed their world!

Isn't that what God has done with each and every one of us? He has given us a story to tell. We are freedom writers. God shows us every day that we matter. He sees us.

There is a quote I love from Brene Brown who is a researcher. She does research on courage and vulnerability.

*“Never underestimate the power of being seen. It’s exhausting to keep working against yourself when someone truly sees you and loves you.”* Brene Brown

Miss G saw them. Miss G loved them. The students didn’t have to work against themselves anymore because they realized they were seen, heard and loved by Miss G’s actions.

We are called to see people. We are called to love people. Miss G is living out her purpose. She is changing lives. Are you? Am I?

We are living in some dark times. God is watching us and waiting for us to live out our purpose. You have a story to tell. Is it His story?

COVID-19 and the racial and political division isn’t going to stop the purpose that God has for you and me, if we fight for it!

What are we fighting for? I want to bring you back to these words from the movie:

“We kill each other over race, pride and respect. We are in a war. We fight for Our America.”

Yes, we are in a war, sometimes a war of words. We as the Church need to be careful we are not fighting the wrong war.

Have you noticed yourself becoming anxious when you see things on Face book or social media or even the news when you think your rights and beliefs are being challenged? Usually it's from the opposite opinion.

So we fight, we fight for what we think is right. But God tells us not to be anxious about anything, and I don't know about you, but making my point with someone else really doesn't bring me peace. It really just divides us even more.

Here is some great news! God does not want us to be anxious and he has a cure for it even in the middle of a crazy world.

Philippians 4:6-7 says: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

God's promise is to fill us with peace if we just take our focus off the world and place it on Him!

One of the lines a young girl said in the movie was "There is no place out there like this for us." (Referring to Miss G's Classroom)

You see, this teacher, Miss G, represented the church to these kids. She gave them something no one else could

give them. Peace, security, acceptance and most of all, love. Unconditional Love. Sounds like Jesus to me. The Church needs to be that place for the next generation!

What or who is the church?

The church described by the world is a building. The church described by the Word of God is HIS PEOPLE.

Matthew 16:13-18.

“When Jesus came to the region of Philippi, He asked his disciples “who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14) They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets” 15) “But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16) Simon Peter Answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” 17) Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18) And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it.”

You see, the church is not a building. A building we can lose at any point in time. But we can't lose who we are. If we are filled with Jesus, the gates of Hell cannot prevail against us!

Are we filled with GOD'S LOVE?

Are we the church? How can we make a difference in this lost world?

There were three things Miss G did to reach these kids and make them want to be in her classroom:

1. She listened to their stories without the intention to change their minds.
2. She invested in their lives and had compassion for them.
3. She used her words to build them up, not tear them down.

Words are so powerful.

Proverbs 18:21 says: “The tongue has the power of life and death.”

The stakes are high guys. Your words can either speak life, or your words can speak death. Our tongues can build others up or tear them down.

What are we saying on social media? How are we sharing our opinions? I’ve been seeing a lot of hostility against political parties.

Are we, the church, acting in such a way that will make the next generation feel like the kids felt in Miss G’s class?

Will the next generation say, “There’s nowhere out there like this for us”? Will they feel safe around you and want to talk to you?

I want us to remember Our Purpose. Miss G lived out her purpose and changed so many lives!

Our Purpose is to be the Church! To be the heart, hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

God says He will build his church on us just like He did with Peter and the gates of Hell will not prevail!

We need to be the light.

We are created to make one thing known, The Cross of Christ. The Cross represents unity because Salvation is for all.

A few years back, I wrote a play called Regrets and Redemption. It was a modern day story of the life of Jesus and His disciples. Jesus was a life guard, Peter was a surfer and the story took place on a beach.

Instead of Roman Soldiers we had a gang who were angry at Jesus for changing the life of Mary Magdalene. She was part of the gang and after she met Jesus, she changed her life and left the gang. The gang set out to kill Jesus.

I had the whole play written and I was so excited and as I was finishing it, I had the gang kill Jesus with a gun. It was then I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "Gina, you can't take away the cross."

I stopped and I replied, "I have to or it won't be up to date. People don't die on crosses in the year 2010. And I heard it again, as clear as could be. It was not an audible voice, but an inner voice, like a whisper, "You can't take away

the cross.” So I said, “Why Lord?” And I heard this as loud as can be... “Because I still have the scars in my hands.”

Those scars are for everyone, even those we completely disagree with.

That’s why we need to fight to show the Cross.

The Cross represents unity. And that’s what the enemy Satan hates. His plan is to divide us and sometimes it looks like it’s working. We need to fight to die to ourselves so we can be God’s light in a lost and dying world. We are the Church!

How do we become the Church? Have a conversation about the story of what Jesus did for us, share the **gospel** instead of a controversial debate. That is how we create unity in a broken and fearful world. Let God do the rest!

Are you feeling anxious, depressed, and uncertain of the future? Hopeless and lonely? Those scars are for you. Jesus died for you to know your purpose and live for Him.

If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus or maybe you did but it’s not as strong as it used to be, you can change that today. It’s as easy as **A B C**.

**A - Admit** you are a sinner and you need a savior.

**B - Believe** God sent you a savior in His only son Jesus, he died on a cross for your sins and my sins. He still has the nail scars in His hands.

**C - Commit** your life to Him.

If you would like that relationship, please pray this prayer with me...

*Dear God, thank you for loving me, I am sorry for all of my sins, past present and future. Please forgive me. Dear Jesus please come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior. Holy Spirit help me live my life for Jesus Christ. For it is in Jesus name I pray. Amen.*