

TEDDY TALK WITH MARTIN UMC FRIENDS AND FAMILY

**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the
Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.**

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17

I am part of that flower growing there
I am part of the birds flying in the air,
Everything flows from just one source,
A giant River of Life—a Force.
As all the rivers connect to the sea,
There is a connection 'tween God and me,
Creator of this Universe vast,
A Universe that will forever last,
And even tiny specks like me
Will live forever—eternally free.

“An Awakening” by Anne Ring

Awake to Being Free

God’s people are all endowed with the gift of free will. That concept may not be shared by all, and I understand the belief is weakened by the way our societies and our theological and political philosophies are rapidly changing. Some of you have heard me tell stories about my grandmother who was a staunch and outspoken member of the Free Will Baptist Church. We even have a handwritten document from 1943 that declares “Sister Amy Poole Chaudoin is recognized as a Pastor in the Healdton Oklahoma Free Will Baptist Church.”

When my cousin discovered the document and forwarded it to me, I was intrigued and a bit amazed. Beyond all, I was thoroughly proud of the fact that “Mama” had risen above the stereotypes and prejudice to assume the pulpit and share her Christ values. Despite my view that Free Will Baptist is misnamed, I find myself quite proud of the knowledge and principles I received from Mama. Amy Poole Chaudoin was my mother’s and her sisters’ Mama, and all my siblings and cousins were encouraged to be free thinkers by those four Chaudoin women.

Free will means you and I can choose to view a situation as positive or negative. We live in a universe where we can choose whether and how to respond to all thing good and bad in our lives. With this freedom, we have the power to change our life experience, lovingly supported, guided, and directed by the Spirit within. Our freedom also allows us to choose to commune with the presence of God in every human creature.

Evidence points to the idea that no situation, incident, event, or personal encounter has power unto itself. Rather, it is based on what you or I choose to see, believe, and enact in our lives. Each day when we arise, we are empowered to meet the world head-on. We choose peace. We choose love. We choose abundance. We choose wholeness. We are free to

choose. This day in this now moment, we begin again with the knowledge that we are free. Let us choose to allow it to be so.

By happenstance I found the poem by Anne Ring that opens this Talk. Sandy and I have a series of devotionals we like to share. Ring's poem, "The Awakening" was added almost as an afterthought to one of the weekly devotions. I liked it, added it to my journal and determined to use it in speeches, sermons, and in my writing. Please read it again. Consider its meaning to you. Allow it to impact you if your spirit is moved by the words. Give serious thought to feeling freedom in your daily real life and dreams.

Peace always,

Ted