

# The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday July 9, 2006

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Ida B. Wells was born on this day in 1862. She was a no-nonsense disciple of Christ. She worked against the oppression of her fellow blacks, fighting tirelessly against the lynch laws. Yet she confided in her diary: "I am so overwhelmed with the little I have done for One who has done so much for me." She added these prayerful words: "Thou hast always fought the battle of the weak and oppressed. Show us the way, even as Thou led the children of Israel out of bondage into the promised land."

Let us pray.

God of the rejected and despised and rejected and despised, Yourself:

Thank You for fighting the battle of the weak and oppressed, the alien, the orphan and the refugee. May we who say we follow You, follow You more faithfully to fight as You fight and befriend as You befriend. May we, who are, by no means, the worst off, and hardly the weakest or the most oppressed of people, readily join You in raising our voices and resources to aid all who are in pain under the powerful of this world. May we, too, be advocates for the impoverished and the dispossessed. May we, too, comfort the victims of injustice, strengthen the weak and lift up the downtrodden. And, Lord, deliver all from harm in which we ourselves have a hand. Open our self-deceived eyes to all the ways that we oppress – whether in our own families, or among our friends, in this city, in our country, and among those who are far away strangers to us, but no strangers to You.

Today, we thank You for the dedicated life and mission of our Christian sister Ida. Though mistreated and misunderstood, she did what was right. May we be as bold as she to speak out against what's wrong and speak up for what's right. You've called us to be salt for the earth and light to the world. We know that salt preserves but it also irritates and that light brings enlightenment and also exposes the darkness for what it is. So give each of us courage and wisdom to preserve and irritate, to be enlightened and exposed.

May we walk by Your Light and live by Your Life and love by the Love that You are.

Thank You for Your presence thus far. Thank You for the promise of Your presence for all the future. And now as we continue to worship You in Your Spirit and Truth, not only in the rest of this hour, but – we pray – in all the hours that, by Your grace, remain to us in this life, hear us in the name of Christ Jesus, who taught us to pray these words:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.