

This Is Why Savanna Hartman Has Offered a Presidential Pardon

Author's Note: This is long. It is probably the longest blog I have ever written. Normally it is something I would share on video, and in the future, I might, but for now, I want to type it so that my heart and message can be accurately conveyed without confusion.

Many of you know I use spoken word poetry to work through my issues, and when it comes to President Trump, I have a lot of them. Initially I was going to do a live spoken word I wrote on Thursday, but it was mega harsh and the tone and heart of it were neither kind nor redemptive. I could feel the Holy Spirit's disapproval as I read it out loud to my husband. Matt encouraged me to work on it before posting it, but I knew in my heart to trash it. So I did. Instead I decided to write a blog and say basically the same thing but without the video, which in my mind would somehow make it OK.

So here I am. Headphones in. Computer on. Document blank. My stubby fingers typing the phrase, "I'll be the first to say I don't like Donald Trump."

But every time I type it out, I feel conviction begin to rest heavily on my heart, and though my computer sits nestled in the corner of my dining room turned office where one of my sons is spinning in circles while the other watches Mickey Mouse YouTube Videos very loudly, I hear the still, small voice of God say to me, "You don't know him."

I wish I was a good enough Christian to say that I hit my knees and prayed for forgiveness or compassion or whatever it is a really good Christian would say in that moment, but I didn't, because I'm not.

I am just a person.

A person who really loves people.

A person who really loves people and wants to see their lives full of joy, hope, value and love.

A person who really loves people and wants to see their lives full of joy, hope, value and love and who really struggles when she feels like someone is coming in the way of that.

I have spoken openly and publicly about my hate of racism and my love of people. In fact, it is within those two things that my entire platform was born.

I have spoken openly against the Dakota Access Pipeline and on more than one occasion have shared my support of the peaceful protesters and movement they represent.

I have spoken openly in favor of aiding Syrian refugees and pleading for prayers on their behalf.

I have spoken openly and fiercely about strong women, their rights and the value of what women bring to the table.

So you can see the position I have found myself in as of late.

You may not feel like that. You may feel like the Trump presidency is adding tremendous value to your life. You may feel joy and hope and value and love. If that's you, that's OK. This isn't against you. It's not even against Trump. I just want you to have some context for the space my heart was and is in.

Here I am in the midst of what I feel like is God trying to teach me something and instead of being pliable and receptive, I just keep getting frustrated. I dig the proverbial heels of my heart in and stand my ground. How could God say I don't know him? Anyone who has Twitter knows him! He is the president of the United States. His life, his past, and his

mouth are at the forefront of every social media or news outlet that exists. I *know* him. We *all* know him, and God has the nerve to say to me, “You don’t know him”?

With much irritation and in a rhetorical “I-don’t-really-want-to-know-but-I’m-going-to-pacify-you” kind of way, I breathed out heavily and found my soul shouting, “So what then is your point, God?” Though His voice was the same still, small voice, His response this time felt louder and more bold, and I suddenly felt smaller.

“I do know him.”

And that was all He had to say.

That may seem weird to you. I know for many of you, it will *not* bring you any kind of resolution for your frustration and hurt, and to some it will even be laughable. It will make you doubt my credibility and kick yourself for even reading this far. But for me, it was enough.

I started to cry, and guys, I cried hard.

I cried because I was arrogant and embarrassed.

I cried because I was judgmental.

But most of all, I cried because I knew that for a long moment, I had forgotten how gross my own heart was. I have spent weeks—months even—acting as though the sins of Donald Trump were somehow worse or more vile than the sins of own self.

The only difference between me and Donald Trump is that his faults and failures, missteps and mistakes, and sin and slipups are on display for everyone to see. I have anonymity. When I fail and freak out and say or do horrible things—and trust me I’ve done plenty. No one sees it. I haven’t grown up in the fishbowl that is the public eye. And you know what? I’m super thankful for that, because God only knows how many of

you would belittle me and leave me behind because of things I said or did when I was selfish, hurt and lost.

I am not making excuses for his statements or behavior. Please don't read this that way. I think that responsibility and accountability should be taken and held—and held tightly. The whole world is watching. But I cannot expect him to be perfect. I can only expect him to try and be the best. It's easy to judge where he sits and say what we would do in his position, but do any of us *really* know?

Do you know what the weight and responsibility for the lives of 325 million people feels like? Because I don't.

Do you know what it is like to manage a \$3 trillion budget? Because I don't.

I *do* know that when my husband I are a few hundred dollars short at the end of the month, I have a full-scale breakdown and wonder how we will live the next few weeks.

I *do* know that when my kids were born, just the weight and responsibility for their two lives kept me up several nights without any sleep, and when I would sleep, it would be poorly.

And I *do* know that I was foolish to judge how he sits in his seat when I know nothing of that pressure or position.

The presidential seat is the highest and most respected seat in this country, but it is not the highest and most respected seat in this world. God resides in that seat and before He came off the throne to pardon me and hang on the cross to wear my sin right alongside Donald Trump's, I was just as messed up as Trump.

A pardon isn't just forgiveness. It's total absolution. It's not just forgiving; it's removing and forgetting.

When Christ pardoned me, He did so freely, readily and abundantly, even though He knew that time and again I would

let Him down. He knew I wasn't perfect and would never be able to be perfect, so He stretched wide His arms so that the burden of perfection would be removed from my life.

Because I am not perfect, I cannot forget the mistakes of Donald Trump. But I can check my self-righteous attitude and arrogant heart at the door and choose to say that who he was isn't who he is and if he is doing something, he's doing something he believes is in the best interest for our country as a whole.

Christ bore the burden of Donald Trump's perfection just as He bore it for me, and I can no longer superimpose my opinion of what that looks like on Trump.

If you aren't a Christian, I hope you know that the evangelical church does not support sexual assault, racism, misogyny, xenophobia or any other thing that you may have (rightfully) felt President Trump embodied or represented. Please know that this message is not an excuse for behavior or a dismissal of your hurt. I have hurt, cried and questioned with you, and I have loved, given and prayed for you.

Know moving forward, that no one, not a politician or person, represents me except for me and Christ.

Today, after a week of executive orders. I am issuing my own presidential pardon.

Because Christ pardoned me, and because I claim to know Him and love Him, I must pardon Donald Trump. {eo}

Savanna Hartman is an author, speaker and spoken-word poet. She and her husband, Matt, have been in ministry together for eight years. They now co-pastor Banner Church, a growing church plant in Ybor City in Tampa, Florida.

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