

Make Them Hear You!

October 17, 2014 By [Angel Mason](#)

✖ Let me start by saying this: I am an HIV-positive man. Marriage equality has blessed me by allowing me to fulfill a lifelong dream.

All of my life, it seems I've struggled for equal rights as an African-American, same-gender-loving man. There were times the battle was so fierce that it almost claimed my life. I even recall a time when I literally had to hire body guards to accompany me to speaking engagements and book signings because homophobic extremists threatened to show up and wreck the meeting, and do me bodily harm if I proceeded as an activist.

There were times when religious zealots who claimed to love God and stand for righteousness (but were really wolves in sheep's clothing) sought to humiliate and embarrass me in public forums when I was being interviewed on television and radio; but God had my back and enabled me to triumph in each and every situation! "I am not a victim, I am a survivor."

I would be lying if I told you that there were not times when I was afraid. There were times I was nervous and very afraid but I always knew God was with me. Because I was black, gay, and a Christian, people in the LGBT and black communities would persecute and ostracize me because of my deep love for God and my passion to fight for equal rights for same-gender-loving people. It saddens me that in the LGBT community, as well as in the heterosexual Christian community people mistakenly believe that being same-gender-loving and Christian are mutually exclusive. But they are not and I am living proof of that! Believe me when I say that being misunderstood because I am both gay and saved is an understatement!

Still, I refused to continue living on this planet for the duration of my life being marginalized, discriminated against, and yoked by the chains of inequality and inequity. "I am not a victim, I am a survivor." During my childhood, I never could understand why people couldn't just leave other people alone. I wondered why they seemed to feel compelled to hurt others who thought differently and who loved differently. To me, being tolerant was, and still is the simplest thing to do!

"I am not a victim, I am a survivor."

Even though my journey has been long, frustrating, difficult and fraught with peril, it was worth it! You see my brothers and sisters, on this historic day (October 6, 2014) hundreds of thousands, if not millions all over America can freely marry the person of their own choosing - a dream I have had all my life!

"I am not a victim, I am a survivor."

I am ever so grateful to God and to all the courageous LGBTQ activists and soldiers who courageously fought for equal rights long before I was ever born. Some of these men and women

