

Injustice: Racism

In the past month, many white communities are starting to have our eyes opened to the true extent of systematic racism around the world. It is not right that it has taken an event such as the murder of George Floyd for us to really wake up to the reality faced by millions of black and ethnic minority communities every day, but now that we have begun to see, let us be a people committed to **prayer and action** against racism and for every person made in the image of God to be treated with the **value** He gives them.

This resource is focused around voices. One of the key things we can do as Christians is to **listen**: to the oppressed and their experiences, and to God and what He is saying. Below, you will find a series of Bible passages which speak about God's heart for justice, followed by facts about the UK and a variety of quotes from people in black and ethnic minority communities and leaders in Christian communities, past and present, speaking out about this issue.

There are no instructions in this resource for how to respond, only questions. We hope that these will open up your conversation with God about this extensive and horrific injustice. We hope that, in turn, this will lead us all into heartfelt prayers of intercession for our world, as we seek an end to racism at all levels of society.

God of Justice

"But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always."

Hosea 12:6

"But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing
stream!"

Amos 5:24

"Evildoers do not understand what is right, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully."

Proverbs 28:5

"He reveals the deep things of darkness and
brings utter darkness into the light."

Job 12:22

“Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him! People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you.”

Isaiah 30:18-19

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8

“And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Jesus' words, Luke 18:1-8

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Isaiah 1:17

“This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.’”

Zechariah 7:9

“The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.”

Psalms 33:5

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Racism Today

"The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way to move forward."

Ijeoma Oluo, 2020

"The first service one owes to others in a community involves listening to them. Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them. God's love for us is shown by the fact that God not only gives God's Word but also lends us God's ear...We do God's work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1954

"Lord, we don't always recognise each other to be brothers and sisters, or we wouldn't treat each other the way we do. We would fight for each other better than we do, or we would stand united better than we do; but we don't recognise. How can we have eyes and not recognise?"

T.D. Jakes, 2020

"We owe it to ourselves to see what is happening in America as a mirror that has been placed before us. We need to ask ourselves, "What is reflected in that mirror? What do we see?"

We must not be under the illusion that we do not have our own very real challenges here; we do. The inherent inequalities in our own system here, the institutional racism that exists in many of our institutions must be named and addressed. I think it is fitting that the way is led by the church."

Pastor Agu Irukwu, 2020

"Let us be clear: racism is an affront to God. It is born out of ignorance, and must be eradicated. We all bear the responsibility and must play our part to eliminate this scourge on humanity."

Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 2020

"We [the black Christian community] have rejoiced with you; will you suffer with us?"

Dr. Anita Philips, 2020

- Over 50% of British young people in prisons are part of an ethnic minority. According to the last Census in 2011, ethnic minorities make up 14% of the UK population.
- Between 2014 and 2018, black people were at least 7 times more likely to be stopped and searched in the UK than white people.
- Black people are detained under the Mental Health Act 4 times more often than white people.
- In 2019, 1 in 5 British police officers were found to have an ethnicity bias strong enough to impact their behaviour.
- Some of the £16 billion in 'debts' awarded to slave owners to repay for the loss of their 'property' (slaves) after the abolition of slavery in 1833 was still being repaid to the descendants of those slave owners until as recently as 2015.
- More than 150 football-related racist incidents were reported in the 2019-20 football season, a rise of more than 50% on the previous season.
- Black women in Britain are 5 times more likely to die in childbirth.

Prayerful Questions

- "Where am I carrying prejudices and fears about others based on their ethnicity or culture? God, will you forgive me, and will you help me to overcome these and to stand against the racism within myself?"
- "Where do I choose the comfort of 'neutrality' instead of the discomfort of engaging with the pain of those oppressed because of the colour of their skin? How can I begin to engage with this reality?"
- "Who am I listening to? Who in the BIPOC community am I listening to and learning from? How can I amplify the voices of the Black community?"
- "What actions am I taking to actively stand up for the oppressed in my community? In the UK? Around the world?"
- "What does God see when He sees a person?"
- "What does God do when He sees injustice and oppression?"
- "What are you saying about all of this, God?"