

From the desk of – Dr. Corey Ingold:

As I write these words, there is outrage in the city of Minneapolis and in our nation, and there should be. The death of George Floyd on Monday at the hands of police officers is indefensible, and thankfully, I have not heard anyone say otherwise. This was something that should never have happened, and there's no crime Mr. Floyd could possibly have committed that warranted the sort of brutality all the world has now witnessed. If anyone disagrees with such thinking, may the Lord have mercy on their soul.

Much prayer is needed. The grieving family of Mr. Floyd needs our prayers, and I cannot imagine the shock and anger they must feel right now that will linger with them for many years and maybe forever. The church should pray for his family that the Spirit might give them the strength they will need as they live on and attempt to honor his memory.

It also seems obvious that the nation in which we live is in need of prayer as well. As we try to focus on the big picture of American history, it may seem sometimes that much progress has been made in the war to combat racism and bigotry. We may be tempted to say that things are so much better nowadays than they were just a few decades back or a century ago, and that may be a delusion under which we live. It may make some of us feel better to believe that is true, but then something like this happens, and we're forced to re-examine this assumption and how empty it now seems. So, our nation needs prayer and God's help to overcome the sin in its collective life. The fight to end racism in this country continues on no matter how much we wish that wasn't true.

However, it seems to me that it goes well beyond the need for prayer. Prayer is powerful and can be a source of great healing in the world. It is the appropriate Christian response in most occasions of life. And yet, it seems we need even more than that to cure what ails us as a nation divided by racism and a plethora of other social ills. I don't profess to know precisely what that may be, but my own encouragement for us is to be more like the One who redeems and who points us in the direction of God.

We may recall that Scripture teaches us Jesus was sent to be a Light to the nations. Though he was born of Jewish heritage and raised in that distinct tradition, his Gospel was for everyone. He seemed not to make much distinction between Jews and Gentiles even though the wisdom of his time on Earth was that God only loved Jews. But in every human life, Jesus saw someone who was a child of God and beloved of God no matter their gender, nationality, or their race.

George Floyd was a child of God too. His life mattered, and it mattered a lot. It's shameful and also tragic that four police officers weren't able to see that. We can assign it to the sorry and sinful state of humanity, but that doesn't excuse it. Our nation has to do better, and the people of God have to model what that means for our neighbors and fellow citizens. This is not what God intended for the world, and every time it happens, the kingdom of God seems a little bit more distant. So, let us show the world what it means to be about the work of Christlike love

and reconciliation and not just be saying nice words but by living out those virtues with integrity. In the meantime, we lament along with the Psalmist praying, “How long, O Lord?”