

Holy Saturday, April 8, 2023

Recommended reading: pp. 451-476, "Justice"

In chapter 18, Nikole Hannah-Jones concludes "The 1619 Project," writing: "The origin story of the United States that we tell ourselves through textbooks and films, monuments and museums, public speeches and public histories...has positioned almost exclusively white Americans as the architects and champions of democracy. And because of this, some have believed that white people should disproportionately reap the benefits of this democracy. But as this book has shown, a truer origin story requires us to place Black Americans prominently in the role of democracy's defenders and perfecters. ...for Black Americans, the freedom struggle has been a centuries-long fight against their own fellow Americans and against the very government intended to uphold the rights of its citizens.... It is unclear what substantial and transformative change will come from the reckoning that began in 2020 or, distressingly, if whatever changes occur will lead to more freedom and equality or less. But by reading to the end of this book, you have gained a sense of the stark reality we must confront...America would not be America without the wealth from Black labor, without Black striving, Black ingenuity, Black resistance. So much of the music, the food, the language, the art, the scientific advances, the athletic renown, the fashion, the guarantees of civil rights, the oratory and intellectual inspiration that we export to the world, that draws the world to us, comes forth from Black Americans, from the people born on the water. That is Black Americans' legacy to this nation. The legacy of this nation to Black Americans has consisted of immorally high rates of poverty, incarceration, and death and the lowest rates of land and home ownership, employment, school funding, and wealth. All of this reveals that Black Americans, along with Indigenous people—the two groups forced to be part of this nation—remain the most neglected beneficiaries of the America that would not exist without us.... If [America is] to be redeemed, we must do what is just: we must, finally, live up to the magnificent ideals upon which we were founded."

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27:57-61)

Tomorrow, we will celebrate an event that seemed completely unexpected—the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of God's new creation. It is the hope of the Just Love team, and of all those who contributed to these forty daily devotions, that you join in our prayers that the power of resurrection will fuel the work for equity and justice in our church and society.

Prayer

God of resurrection, fill us with the fire of your love that we may make your Church a beacon of light in our neighborhoods, our communities, and our nation. Bless all who are now joining the centuries-long task of making our society a place of justice and equity for all. Amen.