

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Perhaps some of you watched one of the memorial services for George Floyd. I watched the service at North Central University in Minneapolis. I did not expect to be moved so deeply, but a flood of emotions came to me. It brought to me memories of fellow K-12, college and seminary friends who are black. It brought to me memories of students that I have worked with as an educator who are black. It brought to me memories of colleagues I have worked with who are black.

Although the service was to honor the memory of George Floyd, in reality, it was much more. It was a reminder to me of the many persons I have known who are black who have been treated unjustly. It was a reminder to me of the discrimination that they faced in their lives over the years, and the discrimination that many of them continue to face today.

I cried as I watched the worship service. Yet in the midst of my sadness, I was heartened to see the peaceful protests on television from all over the United States and some foreign countries. Something seemed different about these events. There was more diversity in the people present. There were more white people participating than I recall from watching some of the protests in the past. There were more people of all colors openly professing that racial injustice and police brutality needs to stop.

My statement is not a criticism of all police officers and others in positions of power. I have known many wonderful police officers, sheriff's deputies, National Guard members, and others in similar roles. I have known many to be responsible, caring human beings seeking to do what is right. But I also know that there are some persons in positions of power who are racist and who use their power in unthinkable ways against people of color. Their hateful actions have and are directed at immigrants, indigenous persons, other persons of color who are foreign or native born, as well as other persons who do not look like them.

The video of George Floyd pinned to the ground with the (former) police officer kneeling on his neck was too much for many of us to watch again and again. As I watched the memorial service for George Floyd, and stood for eight minutes and forty-six seconds (a long time) with others in that virtual assembly, I hoped that this time, change would truly happen. I hoped that the message would continue to resonate among us in the days, weeks, months and years to come. I hoped that what we were and are experiencing in our world today, would be a strong, but peaceful, clarion call. I hoped that the feelings and emotions would stir in us and others an engagement with those around us who hold racist attitudes; an engagement that would bring about peaceful dialogue and positive change.

My sermon for today speaks of our role as disciples of Jesus. May we give honor and glory to God through our loving service to God and all persons whom God has created.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy

June 14, 2020