

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Amos 5:18-24

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light,

¹⁹ as if someone fled from a lion

and was met by a bear

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall

and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰ Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹ I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them,

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like water

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter From a Birmingham Jail, 1963

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.

Prophetic Remembering

Historians have identified at least 250 slave rebellions in North America. In 1791, close to half a million enslaved Africans in Haiti rose up against French rule and won.

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Isaiah 58:3-9

"Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the straps of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator^[b] shall go before you;

the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;

you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Beyond Vietnam" Sermon, 1967

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

Prophetic Remembering

Twelve Presidents of the United States owned slaves: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Andrew Johnson, and Grant.

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Jeremiah 22:13-17

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness
and his upper rooms by injustice,
who makes his neighbors work for nothing
and does not give them their wages,
¹⁴ who says, "I will build myself a spacious house
with large upper rooms,"
and who cuts out windows^[a] for it,
paneling it with cedar
and painting it with vermilion.
¹⁵ Are you a king
because you compete in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink
and do justice and righteousness?
Then it was well with him.
¹⁶ He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
then it was well.
Is not this to know me?
says the Lord.
¹⁷ But your eyes and heart
are only on your dishonest gain,
for shedding innocent blood,
and for practicing oppression and violence.

Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Other America" Grosse Pointe, MI, March 14, 1968

There must be a recognition on the part of everybody in this nation that America is still a racist country. Now however unpleasant that sounds, it is the truth. And we will never solve the problem of racism until there is a recognition of the fact that racism still stands at the center of so much of our nation and we must see racism for what it is.

Prophetic Remembering

Christopher Columbus never set foot on the continent now called North America. He landed in the islands of the Caribbean where, among other things, he "gave" native women to crew members who raped and beat them. The Vikings had visited the North American continent well over 500 years earlier.

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Luke 4:18-30

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" ²³ He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.' " ²⁴ And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, ²⁶ yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷ There were also many with a skin disease in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Martin Luther King, Jr. "The Other America" Grosse Pointe, MI, March 14, 1968

It may well be that we may have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words of the bad people who will say bad things in a meeting like this or who will bomb a church in Birmingham, Alabama, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say wait on time.

Prophetic Remembering

A six-year study published in 2017 by the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) found that 4,084 Black men, women, and children fell victim to "racial terror lynchings" in twelve Southern states between 1877 and 1950, besides 300 that took place in other states.

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Exodus 22:21, 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34

²¹ “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

⁹ “You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

³³ “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien.

³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Martin Luther King, Jr., A Testament of Hope,” 1969

A riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear?...It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility

Prophetic Remembering

The Three-fifths Compromise was an agreement reached during the 1787 United States Constitutional Convention over the inclusion of slaves in a state's total population. This count would determine: the number of seats in the House of Representatives; the number of electoral votes each state would be allocated; and how much money the states would pay in taxes. Slaveholding states wanted their entire population to be counted to determine the number of Representatives those states could elect and send to Congress. Free states wanted to exclude the counting of slave populations in slave states, since those slaves had no voting rights. A compromise was struck to resolve this impasse. The compromise counted three-fifths of each state's slave population toward that state's total population for the purpose of apportioning the House of Representatives, effectively giving the Southern states more power in the House relative to the Northern states. It also gave slaveholders similarly enlarged powers in Southern legislatures; this was an issue in the secession of West Virginia from Virginia in 1863. Free black people and indentured servants were not subject to the compromise, and each was counted as one full person for representation.^[1]

In the United States Constitution, the Three-fifths Compromise is part of Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3. Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) later superseded this clause and explicitly repealed the compromise.

PROPHETIC REMEMBERING

Matthew 25:31-45

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Beyond Vietnam” Sermon, 1967

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

Prophetic Remembering

Young Black males were twenty-one times more likely to be killed by police than their White counterparts between 2010 and 2012. According to federal statistics. . . Black people are five times more likely to be incarcerated than Whites. (Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi *Stamped*.)

SATURDAY

A FEW RESOURCES FOR PROPHETIC REMEMBERING:

Luther E. Smith,
***Hope Is Here! Spiritual Practices for Pursuing
Justice and Beloved Community***

Carol Anderson,
***White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial
Divide***

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz,
***An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United
States***

Michael Eric Dyson,
***Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White
America***

James W. Loewen, ***Lies My Teacher Told Me:
Everything Your American History Textbook Got
Wrong***

Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi,
Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You

Howard Zinn,
A People's History of the United States