



Reflections from Pastor Brooke for June 19, 2020

Give ear, O God, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. — Psalm 86:6 5

Today is Juneteenth. If your education was anything like mine, I was well into my 20s before I had ever even heard of Juneteenth. I went to a racially diverse elementary school that included Black children as well as Indigenous children. That might surprise you in Lincoln, Nebraska. I graduated in the largest class in the state of Nebraska when I graduated from high school. Okay, I know, it's Nebraska, so large high schools were hard to come by. But even though I graduated from a diverse high school, I don't remember ever hearing about Juneteenth, let alone the burning and killing of people on Black Wall Street in Oklahoma. It was when I was applying for my first job out of college in Texas that I learned about Juneteenth. You see, Juneteenth is a state holiday in Texas and I worked for a state institution.

I have been doing a lot of praying about what is happening in our country right now. My prayers are that I don't do too much more harm. I know I am going to make mistakes as I continue to learn about systemic racism and I know I will have to ask for forgiveness. But asking for forgiveness is part of our faith. We worship a God who offers forgiveness every time we ask. I believe that when we pray, God hears us. While the Psalmist asks God to hear his prayer, our faith tells us that even before it crosses our lips, God has already heard and is listening to our supplication.

Most of us in this congregation are white, and my prayer is that we will be willing to look at what that means in a country where it has too long been the norm. Black slaves were brought to this country 400 years ago and we as a system — not as individuals — continue to see them as “less than.” It is my hope that you will join me, beginning the middle of July, in reading and discussing *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. Yes, it is written by a white woman, but I think it is her voice we need to hear first. There will be more details coming.

Until then, I hope your prayers of supplication include prayers for our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color siblings; as well as for us, as we embark on this journey of looking at how race has played a role in our life.

Blessings,

Pastor Brooke