

**Faith in Action: Public Life and Politics**  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seymour Indiana  
Pastor Blumenberg  
**October 11, 2020**

**Overview:** This class will seek to apply God's Word to current issues in public life, helping us be influencers rather than merely reacting to events and trends. Today we look at issues of racism and justice, which have been at heightened levels of debate and conversation for several months. For more, read "**Racism and the Church,**" [lcms.org](http://lcms.org).

**1. The Context of Discussing Racism Today**

Several recent events have inflamed complaints of racism and "systemic racism:"

- The death in Minnesota of George Floyd May 25, 2020 led to protests, looting, and rioting in Minneapolis, Seattle, Indianapolis, and other metropolitan areas.
- The death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville resulted from an exchange of fire between police and a suspect in an apartment being investigated for drug trafficking.
- The death in Indianapolis of a young black man May 7 who was live streaming himself being pursued by police and failing to obey their orders.

Groups including Black Lives Matter have linked these "death by police" cases to "systemic racism" and "war on blacks" in our nation's policing and justice. Businesses, schools, professional sports leagues, and some churches have demanded an end to "racial injustice" including a revamping of policing and a revision of American history.

**2. What Is "Racism?"**

While not all use the same definition, the following is a generally accepted definition:

"Racism" has been defined as "the theory or idea that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and certain traits of personality, intellect, or culture and, combined with it, the notion that some races are inherently superior to others." (Encyclopedia Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> edition)

**Race:** Many anthropologists today argue that thinking of "race" as a distinct kind of human is a false distinction. There is one human species or family, with many variations of pigment, but the external differences are superficial.

**Prejudice** is an attitude of deep dislike of or hostility to individuals or an ethnic group based on faulty generalizations. It may lead to discrimination.

**Systemic or institutional racism** alleges that laws, customs, practices, and procedures function to the disadvantage of a given group of people, even if not consciously.

**3. What Does History Say?**

The United States was formed by people of many different ethnic groups and is still diverse. The Declaration of Independence states: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with*

*certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" Not all principles of equality were practiced at the outset. There have been a series of developments.

- Slavery was not invented in America, nor was it corrected from the outset.
- 700,000 + died in the 1860s Civil War to preserve the Union and to end slavery.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> amendment gave black men the right to vote (1870). The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1920 gave all women the right to vote.
- The Civil Rights Act and subsequent actions have further advance racial equality in the United States.

#### 4. **What does the Bible Say about Race and Racism?**

**Read Acts 17:24-26 (1179)**

**Revelation 4:11 (1313)**

**Revelation 7:9-10 (1315)**

**Genesis 1:26-27 (2)**

**Genesis 9:6 (8)**

While humans are not all identical in appearance, what do all have in common?

**Read Genesis 9:18-27 (9)**

Does this establish or sanction "racism?"

#### 5. **Remedy for Racism and Other Sins**

**Read John 1:14 (1127)**

What can we learn from the human ancestry of Jesus?

**John 3:16 (1130)**

**1 Timothy 2:1-6 (1263)**

**Galatians 3:28 (1238)**

**Acts 1:6-8 (1156)**

**Acts 10:34-35 (1169)**

What is the scope of Christ's work of salvation?

#### 6. **Getting in the Conversation**

To oppose racism, must you support certain movements?

How do you effect change in human attitudes and behavior?

How should we deal with failures in the past?

What about “Juneteenth” and “the 1619 project?”  
**Next week: Justice – legal and economic questions**