

There is No ‘Them’

Course Outline:

Thank you for joining me in this journey. While the answer to this lingering problem sounds easy – just stop it! – we know from experience that the problem of racism is much harder than that. We’ve come a long way since the days of snarling dogs and fire hoses and burning crosses. But what we’ve left ourselves with is something harder, as it is more insidious. In our time together, we will not solve a problem, but we may find ways to help each other think harder and work harder for the sake of our neighbors and friends. A journey starts with the decision to take the journey. We may all be surprised where we end up.

Each week we’ll meet via Zoom.

The link for each week will be: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84892066324>

Please note, this is the link for all meetings for this class.

Our class will begin at 7:30 pm. I’ll begin each week at 7:15 for anyone who would like to join early to visit with other classmates. This time isn’t required, but we will begin our classwork promptly at 7:30 pm. Some of our time will include some co-presenters, which you’ll learn about as we move forward. Too, we will also use the meeting room function in Zoom. This will allow us to break into smaller groups and talk about some of the things included in our topic for the evening.

Below is an outline for our work together. As we move through the weeks ahead, I’ll update this with more information and additional resources to go with our discussions.

Introduction to the Question

September 9 Introduction

September 16 Letter From Birmingham Jail

Resources: Letter From Birmingham Jail

You can find a copy of the letter in a variety of places online. Here are two in particular:

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/02/letter-from-a-birmingham-jail/552461/>

Reflections on the Letter:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?317935-1/letter-birmingham-jail-reflection>

Statement by Alabama Clergymen

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/sites/mlk/files/lesson-activities/clergybirmingham1963.pdf>

Reading of Letter from Kirwin Institute

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cT397uOak&has_verified=1

September 23 Does the Bible have anything that could guide us?

September 30 The work of the church and undermining racism
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwohWajHOp0&utm_source=N.T.+Wright+Online+Master+List&utm_campaign=f110501d0e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_06_24_05_36&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7ce9dc4e26-f110501d0e-433428653&mc_cid=f110501d0e&mc_eid=8f7cabd4ab

Why do white people struggle with this issue so much?

An interesting place to begin with this section might be Harvard's Implicit bias test. You can access it here:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

The following sessions will work out of the book **White Fragility**

October 7 After Civil Rights; Race and White People
Chapters 3-5

October 14 Some societal White responses
Chapters 6-8

October 21 So what does this look like?
Chapters 9-11

So how do we think about racism?

How do we, can we, describe what racism looks like? In this section, we'll take a look at Ibram X. Kendi's **How to be an Antiracist**

November 4 Definitions
Chapters 1-3

November 11 Is it something in our bodies?
Chapters 4-6, 9

November 18 Is it how we act?
8, 10, 11

Is it possible to work against this?

This feels like a poignant, but important, question. Can we work to leave this place and begin to find a new one? Where might we begin?

Layla Saad's **Me and White Supremacy**

January 6

January 13

January 20

But what about the law.

The law protects us all equally, right?

February 3 Netflix's 13th

February 10 Just Mercy

Now, let's talk some theology.

One of the questions in Christian theology is, "where is God in suffering?" The theologian James Cone has asked this question in his last book, **The Cross and the Lynching Tree**. Are we able to see the suffering of Jesus – the one who died an unjust death – in the bodies of those men and women who have suffered? Can it change how we look at our Black sisters and brothers? How we look at ourselves and our actions as Christians?

February 24

March 3

March 10

March 17

Now what?

In these days of Lent and as we anticipate Easter, let's think about where we've been and where we may be going. We should begin to see that this has broad implications for us as Christians and as humans. Let's think about this and use a sermon by William J Barber II as our jumping off point.

March 31 We are Called to be a Movement

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOR_mHncUDI

April 7

Now what?