

unjust? Would you use another word to describe those practices? Unfair? Unequal? While we certainly have seen unjust laws overturn in the past, are there some today that need to be changed? Contemplate these thoughts and write your own here.

Thursday, January 21

Read Acts 5:27-32. When Paul is confronted by the religious leaders of his day, they reminded him that they had warned him not to be teaching about Jesus. Paul and the disciples disobeyed this warning and they responded to the leaders saying, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Vs. 29) This response by Paul and the apostles implies a greater question: What has authority in your life? What influences upon your life do you hold in highest regard? Have you ever had to make a decision to place your Christian values above the values of other? Have you had to challenge organizations or the church because of your values? Have you witnessed this type of confrontation? Think about the issues of our time and how our Christian values influence our approach to those issues. Write your thoughts here.

Friday, January 22

Even though we seek to work in concert with other followers of Jesus the Christ, we do not always agree on the same path or approach to addressing the issues of our day. Are there ways in which we can disagree with our sisters and brothers in Christ and at the same time support their actions in response to Christ's call upon their lives? What are the absolutes upon which followers of Jesus must agree? Write your thoughts here as you pray for God's wisdom and direction.

Message Notes – January 17, 2021

Doxology – Trust and Obey*

- I. I grew up near a small town where there were very few people of _____ in my hometown.
 - A. It wasn't as if we were hateful but I do believe there was a propensity to be _____.
 - B. In other words, we pre-judged or had preconceived notions of people of other _____ and _____.
 - C. Martin Luther King Jr. went to _____ University School of Theology which is a United Methodist founded university.
 - D. If I know one thing, I know that at any given time of any given day, it's not about _____.
 1. And I believe that Dr. King would say it's not about him – even as we _____ him this weekend and tomorrow.
 2. It's about systemic structures that _____ people.
 3. It's about the church failing to be the _____ of a nation.
 4. It's about crossing barriers to create better _____.
- II. On April 16, 1963, King issued his famous Letter from _____ Jail.
 - A. The civil rights leader was locked up in the city jail after being arrested for his part in the Birmingham campaign, a nonviolent _____.
 1. So why did King write the letter? Because eight white Alabama clergymen had written a statement calling King's efforts " _____ and _____."
 2. They wanted King to _____ and see if a new

*Acts 5:27-32 and Ephesians 3:20-21

city administration would improve conditions for blacks.

3. King responded that for blacks in the U.S., the word "_____ " almost always meant "_____."
- B. The story of Peter and the apostles could easily be labeled "Letter From a _____ Jail."
 1. The apostles decided to obey _____, rather than _____.
 2. This was a _____ for Martin Luther King Jr. as well.
 3. King said that there are two types of laws: _____ and _____.
 4. A just law, according to King is: "Any law that _____ human personality." An unjust law is: "Any law that _____ human personality."

- III. _____ today are certainly going to have different ideas about where to draw the line between just and unjust laws.
- A. We may not all agree with each other, but we do need to support each other in our attempts to follow the guidance of _____.
 - B. All I need to know most about any other human being is that Jesus Christ _____ for them.
 - C. Because of that fact alone, they are immeasurable _____ in God's kingdom!
 - D. The challenge for Christians is to _____ God and fight for laws that uplift human beings.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, January 18

Most people in our church and community would probably agree with the statement, "I'm not racist." But if we consider racism as

a spectrum and not an either/or proposition, we may find that our thoughts and actions might be reflective of other words. Could you possibly be prejudice, having some preconceived notions about people who are different from you? Are you comfortable with certain people in different situations? For instance would you be comfortable with people different from you living in your neighborhood but would be uncomfortable with them living next door. In reading that question did the thought occur to you about what the phrase "different from you" meant? Racism is not always clearly defined. Think about the possibility that you may have feelings of prejudice within you. The purpose of this endeavor is not to beat yourself up but to open yourself to new understandings from other people's perspectives. Write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, January 19

Pastor Jack mentioned his belief that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would say that his civil rights activities were not about him. It's about systemic structures that oppress people. It's about the church failing to be the conscience of a nation. It's about crossing barriers to create better understanding. Still, as we honor Dr. King this week, it may be good to realize that it's not about us either. The struggle for civil rights is always about others and the deeper understandings we can have through communicating with each other. Do you recognize systemic structures of oppression? How can we the church address these entrenched structure? Write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, January 20

Read Acts 5:27-32. Just as Paul believed in a higher authority than the religious leaders of his day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed that there were just and unjust laws. Can you think of laws, past or present, that are unjust? Are there common practices in communities, organizations or businesses that you believe to be