

Mark 12: 35-37

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, 'How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?' 36 David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.' "

37 David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?' And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

Meditation: The issue here is the status, the authority, of the messiah. The messiah is no mere 'son of David.' The whole substance of Jesus' ministry and mission should reveal this to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. If Jesus is, indeed, the messiah of God, he is 'Lord' over David and Lord over all as the creative 'Word' (John 1:1) of God.

The issue of authority is a big one in Jesus' world. Everyone had a place, a status in the order of things. Race, gender, family, class and more determined your privilege and rights as a person. As someone of low-class Jesus not only identifies with those without privilege, he actively opposes and is opposed by those who carry the authority and status. The sad reality is that even though those who are most oppressed in his society are his greatest supporters, in the end, the ruling authorities have the kind of PR savvy and ruthless political engineering to turn even the crowds against Jesus and bring Rome on side to be the heavies in executing Jesus.

And given the realities of what's happening right now in the U.S. in our own Canadian cities and around the world, what does 'white' privilege mean? What does any privilege mean? How does ignorance, denial and a refusal to accept collective, generational responsibility for racism in ourselves and in our society contribute to the division and oppression of the humanity around us Jesus has called us to embrace as family?

As followers of Jesus, we need to listen, especially to those who experience the racism firsthand on a daily basis in so many ways that many of us would never understand within our own experiences. Privilege means that we take things for granted, like being treated with respect, trusted on the street, feeling safe and secure most days and in most places. As one under threat and his earliest followers also, the love Jesus calls us to live is all about stepping out of any privilege we may have to listen and see how others suffer because of the colour of their skin, their race, their gender identity if they don't 'pass' as clearly male or female and so many other ways judgement and oppression happen by appearances.

Prayer: Forgive us, Lord, not for being who we are, but in not seeing others for who they are and not accepting their pain, hurt and oppression when it implicates us. Forgive our complacency. Forgive our inability to stand with others in how they need us to stand with them. May we learn how to follow Jesus as our Lord and may we refuse the way of comfort or convenience over truth and justice. May love prevail in our lives and may we find the right ways to express such love based on where we are personally situated in our privilege or lack thereof; Amen.