

**Title: Beauty for Ashes**

**Text: Isaiah 61:1-3, 8-9; Exodus 3:7-8; Amos 5:21-24; I Samuel 17:40**

**Date: October 4, 2020**

**WARM-UP QUESTIONS:**

1. How would you define and differentiate between “prejudice”, “discrimination”, and “injustice”? Can you remember a personal example where you experience each of these?
2. In a similar thought exercise, how would you define and differentiate between “ethnic preference”, “racism”, and “ethnic supremacy”? How are you feeling about the national conversation on race? What do you see as some of the root issues and factors?

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. Reading Exodus 3:7-8, how is the Hebrews’ experience in Egypt an occurrence of racism? What were the visible signs and evidence of this taking place? How did power, privilege, and position play into this episode?
2. The people of Israel, later in its history, engaged and actively participated in expressions of injustice. In Amos 5, what examples were cited by the prophet? How is it possible for someone to inflict such injustice on people of one’s own race?
3. Read through Isaiah 61. What are some of the active verbs of how God’s people, inspired by the Spirit of God, are to live and behave in the society? Note the promises that God makes for people who pursue this kind of living.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Think back and recall past instances where you felt that you encountered racism (in whatever form or expression). How is the Gospel of Jesus able to speak into your mind and heart and address any roots of bitterness and anger? How can we feel release and freedom from those situations?
2. When you have caught yourself thinking a racist thought toward another person? How can God give you courage and clarity to confront, identify, and own that and to seek justice and righteousness toward that person?
3. Why is the discussion of injustice and the resulting unrest such an uncomfortable topic? Even as Evergreen-LA is addressing this topic right now, what do you see as positive signs and/or challenges that our church faces going forward?