

A SEASON OF NEW GROWTH

Scripture used: [John 20:1 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon spent the first few minutes of the service commenting on the extraordinary verdict that came out of Minneapolis on Tuesday. He used the words from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., asserting that human progress is not inevitable, but comes from the tireless efforts of the coworkers of God. The verdict is a victory for all, for we are all affected by the presence of justice or injustice, and even as we all suffer together or are restored together ([1 Corinthians 12:26](#)). We all won on Tuesday. We live in the deep solidarity of knowing that an injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Today we read again the stunning Scripture about the miracle of the Resurrection. Our dreams are depleted today, just as the dreams of Jesus' followers were after He died on the cross. We face racial injustice, the coronavirus pandemic and the quarantine, and brutal killings across the US. We struggle with grief and depression. We can only begin to dream again when we proclaim "Thank God I am a seed!"
- 2) Insight arises when we imagine a dialogue with the seed in us. We must acknowledge our reality. We are in the dark, effectively overwhelmed, under unrelenting pressure. We have to be honest about our feelings, including the impression that God has forgotten about us. Yet we must expect to grow. The seed will sprout despite the feeling of being buried, and together with other seeds will produce a great harvest. Remember that in the darkness you are already growing. This is the miracle of transformation and new life.
- 3) We can be entirely focused on the present misery, the intense and never-ending darkness. We forget to acknowledge and find hope in the internal growth already happening. What appears to be stagnation may be facilitation, and we are reminded of the importance of examining the interior of our lives, and unlocking positive change. For instance, an addict's years of failures and shortcomings amount to useful accumulated experience, recognizing when we lie to ourselves and others, and knowing full well the awful result. We know our cycles and rituals of weakness. We move from guilt and hopelessness to knowledge. We develop a capacity to make different choices and to help others.
- 4) In [Psalm 139:1-2](#), the Lord is asked to examine our hearts, to know everything about us, to search and test us, and point out anything that offends. This is the inward journey. We cannot hate those who oppose us, as we then become like them. We are learning as we struggle. We discover the reactions, rationales, visions, desires that are changing, dying, or coming to life in us. We focus on the right things and tap into the power of God. The seed gives birth to a season of new growth.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Socrates is famous for saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Pastor Hurmon in this message encouraged us all to do "interior work" to reflect on our reality, our feelings, and our responses to others. Have you had an earlier season of your life where internal reflection catalyzed significant change in your life? Do you regularly engage in internal reflection now? Why or why not?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Reflect on [Psalm 139](#). Pastor Hurmon noted the progression that occurs from verse 19-24 in this psalm. The psalmist is honest about his desire for retribution, revenge, and justice that flows from hatred. And yet, the psalm ends on a reflective note, indicating that the psalmist also recognizes that God's heart is perhaps different from his own heart, and the psalmist actually needs to grow in order to fully represent the heart of God, to reflect God's heart of both grace and justice. Is there a place in your life right now where you need to be honest with how you feel, AND bring that feeling to God and pray the prayer of the psalmist in [Psalm 139:23-24](#)? What happens when we refuse to do the work of internal reflection? How would the challenges of our country and world today look differently if those on opposing sides committed to honest internal work?
- 3) **DO** - As we trust God in the midst of the darkness and challenges in our life right now, commit to one practical act of internal reflection this week, whether personal prayer, talking with a friend, or journaling. Join us next Sunday as we continue our series, "Grow"!