



Community Ground Rules (write on the board)

- * Listen with intent to learn.
- * Stay engaged.
- * Speak your truth.
- * Make sure to share time with others.
- * Maintain confidentiality.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, you made us in your image and redeemed us through Jesus your son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Eric Law, The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb

Closing Prayer

Freestyle, or:

We thank all of you for sharing. We hope that you will come back for our second book discussion.

May the God who has brought us thus far and loves us too much to let us go bless the good work we have done today and keep us safe and close to heart until we meet again.

And the people of God say: Amen.

Questions for Discussion (15 minutes each, maximum.)

1. If you consider yourself to be white, how often do you and what causes you to think about your own whiteness/race/construction of race? If you consider yourself to be a person of color, how often do you and what causes you to think about your skin color/race/construction of race?
2. In the second chapter, Kelly Brown Douglas observes that Black bodies are frequently assumed to be guilty and cites numerous examples of black murder victims “put on trial.” Is there a time when your eyes were opened up to this? Is overcoming this pervasive image a priority within your communities (church, neighborhood, etc.)? If not, how can you help make it a priority?
3. In the third chapter, Douglas talks about “Manifest Destiny.” She describes it as a “just war” undertaken in the name of God against black bodies (pg. 110-11). How has this position negatively affected various people groups in the world? Making this right includes 1.) a proper apology, and 2.) a commitment to fully righting the wrongs. Within this framework, what can America do for the people groups adversely affected by Manifest Destiny? How can our community participate in this work?
4. After the acquittal of his son’s killer, Tracy Martin said, “My heart is broken, but my faith is unshattered (p.137). Douglas shares her insights on how black faith in America has lived in that tension of despair and hope, crucifixion and resurrection. What thoughts and feelings does this tension raise in you?
5. Douglas draws strong comparisons of the social classification and crucifixion of Christ with the social classification and lynching of black people. She states, “the Matthean question today might be, ‘But Lord, where did we see you dying and on the cross?’ And Jesus would answer, ‘On a Florida sidewalk, at a Florida gas station, on a Michigan porch, on a street in North Carolina. As you did it to one of these young black bodies, you did it to me (pp.179-180).’” This is a powerful connection between an image that is part of our religious heritage – and the current context of deep suffering. What does her comparison evoke in you? How are we, as Christians, called to respond when we see such suffering?
6. White Baptist minister Michael Bledsoe suggested, “that if the victims of these stand-your-ground crucifixions were white, he had no doubt that the white churches would speak up. Remaining silent, he said, was to cooperate with evil (p. 199).” This same silence and passivity is what prompted Dr. King’s ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail.’ What role should the church (as a white church / black church) play in dismantling racism? How can this work be furthered in our community?