

Privilege, Process, Transformation

An Introduction to White Privilege and leading our communities from conversation to transformation.

Centered in the Word

- **Ruth 1: 1-14**

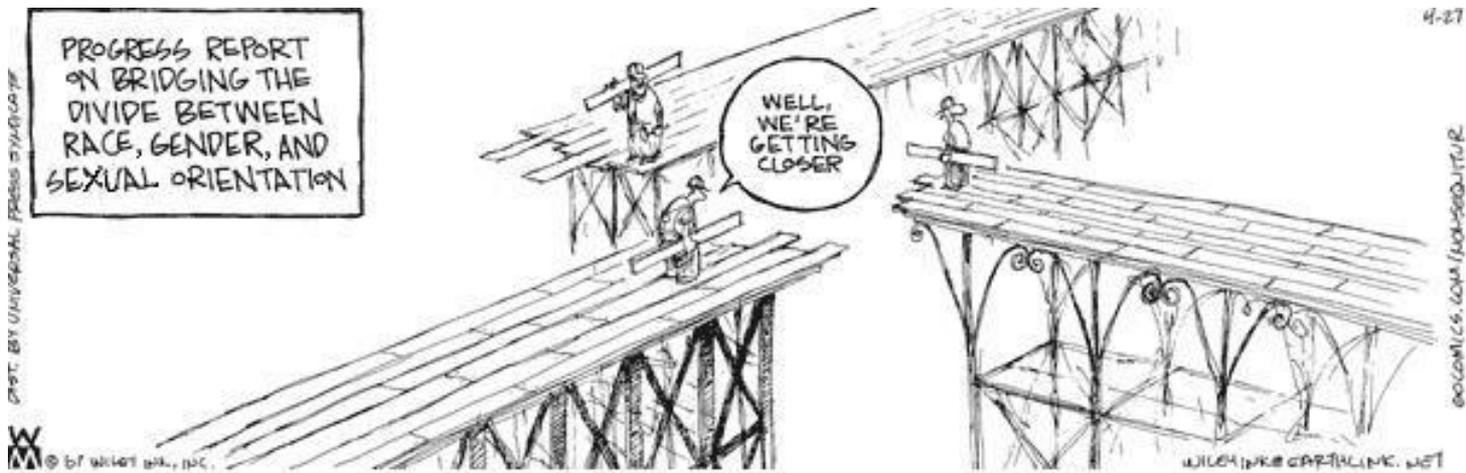
Setting/Context/Action

- **1:15ff.**

Conclusion

What might have been the take away for the ancient Israelites?

How does this story interact with our current stories around race and privilege?



Why are we talking about Racism and White Privilege today?

Ferguson. Baltimore. Staten Island. North Charleston. Cleveland.

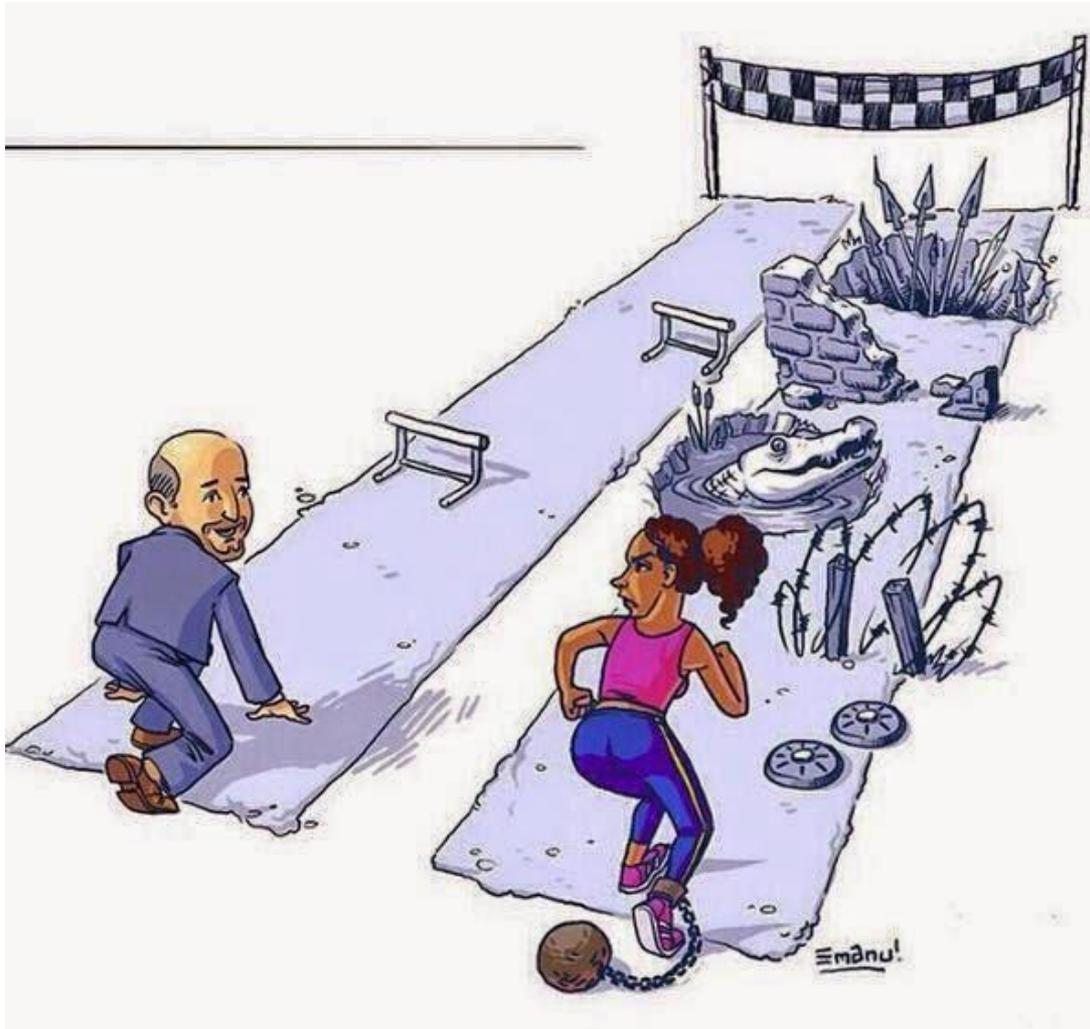
“America is living through a moment of racial paradox.

Never in its history have black people been more fully represented in the public sphere. The United States has a black president and a glamorous first lady who is a descendant of slaves. African-Americans lead the country’s pop culture in many ways, from sports to music to television, where show-runners like Shonda Rhimes and Lee Daniels have created new black icons, including the political fixer Olivia Pope on “Scandal” and the music mogul Cookie Lyon on “Empire.”

Yet...

If current trends continue, one in three black men are expected to spend time in prison at some point in their lives. The Great Recession wiped out twice as much black wealth as it did white, and the raw numbers are even more stark: Post-recession median household wealth for a white family in 2014 was almost \$142,000, down from \$192,500. The median wealth for black households had fallen to \$11,000 from \$19,200. There are 1.5 million black men “missing” in America, because they are either dead or in prison.”

NYTimes 6/30/15



The first step is admitting that we have a privilege problem.

Freed in Christ – 1993, Working Definitions – 2008, Letter (&Video) Bishop Eaton

- ELCA anti-racist operating assumptions:
- If we were born in the United States, we were born into a racist society without any of us giving our permission or consent.
- White privilege was established in the early days of this country and it was expanded upon as this country traveled from east to west. What this means is, that in this country racism is an inherited feature of our society and systems about which we had no part in creating or any choice about being born into.
- The work to understand how racism works and how we can combat and dismantle the workings of racism requires partnership.

The Women of the ELCA wrote in a statement in 2009:

- We believe the gospel calls us to repel racism. We believe that the love of God revealed to us through Christ' death, burial, and resurrection made us one family of humanity. Our justification has reconciled us to God and to each other. Therefore, we must learn how to recognize, name, and reject racism.
- We believe the gospel calls us to dismantle racism. Racism divides God's people and is therefore, an assault on the very gospel of Jesus Christ and the family of God.
- We hope to capture glimpses of God's creation as God created it – in wholeness and diversity.

- We pray that our communities will respond to this call to live justly and seek racial equity in order to transform individual lives, communities, and the world.



- **Racism** claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence. **Racism** asserts the superiority of one ethnicity over another or others. Finally, **racism** seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, use of language and policies. Racism ranges from the individual to the institutional level.
- Related to these relatively obvious manifestations of racism is a subtle system that also contributes to the maintenance of the racial status quo. That subtle system is white skin privilege.

- **White skin privilege** is not something that white people necessarily do, create or enjoy on purpose.
- Unlike the more overt individual and institutional manifestations of racism, white skin privilege is a transparent preference for whiteness that saturates our society.
- White privilege provides perks, creates advantages, and shapes the world in which we live — the way that we navigate and interact with one another and with the world.

- How do we do this together?
- Bishop Eaton's letter and Churchwide Conversation (Online)
- UPNYS – Bishop Macholz and Synod Council are leading us in a time of reflection and reading leading up to the Synod Assembly. The New Jim Crow
- Synod Assembly focus will include inspiration, conversation, and dedication.
- Action Steps will be provided to congregations.

- A Proposal for a Seasonal Study in Racism and Privilege

- 7 Step Process of Change
 1. Awareness
 2. Exploration
 3. Commitment
 4. Skill Development
 5. Skill Refinement
 6. Internalization
 7. Change

Process to include Pre-Assessment of your congregation.

Tools to engage your congregation in controversial Topics.

A vision to what Transformation looks like.

- Where do you see the benefits of privilege?
- How open is your congregation to discussing “tough topics?”
- How can you prepare yourself for Synod Assembly and your community for the conversation to come?



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