



Medgar Evers

by Sister Jaris W. Roberts

Day I

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Scriptures for Mediation

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."

Acts 10:34-35

Critical Race Facts!

In 1935, Joe spinner Johnson, a share cropper and leader of the Share Croppers' Union in Perry County Alabama, was called from work by his landlord and delivered into the hands of a white gang. The gang tied Mr. Johnson "hog-fashion with a board behind his neck and his hands and feet tied in from t of hi" and beat him. They took him to jail in Selma, Alabama, where other inmates heard him being beaten and screaming. Mr. Johnson's mutilated body was found several days later in a field near the town of Greensboro.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the safety and protection that You provide to each of us on a daily basis. While it seems at times that our ancestors were without protection, I thank you that they withstood their trials, tribulations and even death that we may enjoy what we have today. Let us live our lives so that their lives were not in vain. In Jesus Name, Amen.

As a child, I played in my neighborhood, went to school with my friends, and went to church in my community. Never once did I feel afraid or alone. I had confidence and felt safe. Why? I had not been exposed and tainted with the poison of "hate." This, however, changed for me when I was a junior in high school. For the first time I felt fear, because I realized that there were people who hated me and wanted me dead or at least be subservient to them because the color of my skin is BLACK.

We were getting ready for summer vacation. I was a rising senior. It was June 12, 1963, the 157th day of the year, and life was great! Then, came the news... Medgar Evers (I had never heard of him), a Civil Rights activist was shot in his driveway outside his home, in his community, near his friends and close to his family. His killer was a crazed supremacist and a member of the Klan. His name was Byron De La Beckwith.

It began to sink into my psyche that I lived in a city that surrounded BLACK people with communities that my people could not go into without severe consequences, but they could come into my community and do damage with no consequences (It took about 30 years before Medgar's killer was convicted). Medgar Evers embodied the belief that America is the "land of the free and the home of the brave," as well as believed that we "all" are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Are these statements true? Yes, they are but we have to fight for them because we are shown daily that they will not be freely given to us.

There have been many more Medgar Evers murders (different names but the same hate killed them). The Klan has changed its uniform, but it still touts the same message. Our culture has been embedded with mistrust and disunity, but the good thing is that God has brought about much change and there is more change to come. We need to do our part by voting, teaching our children our history, not playing it safe, and really be "peculiar" people.

Questions to Ponder

What can you do to memorialize the life of Medgar Evers so that neither his life nor his death was in vain?