



The Assassination of JFK

By Trustee Debra W. Jones

Day 24
March 21, 2023

Scriptures for Mediation

Read Matthew 10:28

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Critical Race Facts!

On August 7, 1930, a large white-mob used tear gas, crowbars, and hammers to break into the Grant County Jail in Marion, Indiana, to seize and lynch three young Black men who had been accused of murder and assault. Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, both 19 years old, were severely beaten and hanged, while the third young man, 16 year-old James Cameron, was badly beaten but not killed. Photographs of the brutal lynching were shared widely, featuring clear images of the crowd posing beneath the hanging corpses, but no one was ever prosecuted or convicted. The hunting images inspired writer Abel Meeropol to compose the poem that later became the song *Strange Fruit*.

Today's Prayer:

Lord, thank You for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for my civil rights and social standing. Lord, thank You for paying ultimate price for my salvation. In Jesus Name, amen.

I remember traveling with my mother or grandmother to Norfolk, Virginia, and having to drop our dimes in the box at the front of the bus, get off the bus and use the back door to find a seat. My mother worked as an assistant housekeeper at the Golden Triangle Hotel where there were separate bathrooms and water fountains for colored and white employees, and blacks could not eat in Woolworth's Department store.

President Kennedy defined civil rights as not just a Constitutional issue, but also a “moral issue.” He also proposed the Civil Rights Act of 1963, which would provide protection of every American's right to vote under the United States Constitution, end segregation in public facilities, and require public schools to be integrated.

While I was only 10 years old when President Kennedy was assassinated, I would not understand the impact of his work for civil rights until two years later. In 1965 I was part of the desegregation of the public schools in Portsmouth, Virginia, when a small number of Black students were the first to attend Harry Hunt Junior High School. There were challenges with being the only Black student in a class and not being able to socialize with the other Black students. To quote Helen Keller, “*Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.*”

Because of the fight for civil rights by Martin, Malcom, Mandela, Marcus and thousands of others, we have made great strides, but there is still much, much more work to be done.

