



# Plessy Verses Ferguson

By Minister Karma Gaines-Ra

**Day 18**  
**March 14, 2023**

**Scriptures for Mediation**

**Read Colossians 4:1**

“Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”

**Critical Race Facts!**

Documented African American  
Lynching Victims by Southern State  
1877 – 1950

Alabama	361
Arkansas	492
Florida	311
Georgia	589
Kentucky	168
Louisiana	549
Mississippi	654
North Carolina	123
South Carolina	185
Tennessee	233
Texas	335
Virginia	84

Total 4084

**Today's Prayer**

Lord, give us a cause that's greater than ourselves. And help us to encourage and support others as we desire to be encouraged and supported. In Jesus Name, **amen**.

Before it was legal for people of color to travel in the same cars on a train, many discriminative laws were entertained. Today, we seldom think about the struggle when boarding a train or plane. Although years have passed, the struggle has continued. Conscious and intentional acknowledgements of Human and Civil Rights is an underlying fabric in this cultural society still riddled with bigotry and racism.

Homer Plessy who was 7/8 White and 1/8 African, was chosen by the “Committee of Citizens”, a group of New Orleans residents who sought to repeal the Separate Car Act. This Act required separate railway cars for blacks and whites. In 1892, because of Plessy’s white features, (he was technically black) the Committee asked him to participate in testing this law. The railway was cooperative because it would benefit them financially.

At the Press and Royal Streets train station, Plessy boarded the car designated for “whites only.” When he was told to vacate the whites-only car, Plessy refused and was arrested. At Plessy’s trial, his lawyers argued that the Separate Car Act violated the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments. The judge did not agree with them. The judge ruled that Louisiana could enforce this law. Plessy lost and was convicted. The Supreme Court’s decision in this case enunciated the pernicious doctrine of “separate but equal” accommodations. This introduced a hypocritical rationalization into the national lexicon, dividing the races into opposing camps. This Louisiana law was upheld from 1896 to 1954, when Brown v. Board of Education signaled the end of legalized racial segregation in schools of the United States, overruling the “separate but equal” principle set forth in the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case.

A marker placed at Press and Royal Streets on February 12, 2009, commemorated the arrest of Homer Plessy on June 7, 1892, for violating the Louisiana 1890 law.

**Questions to Ponder**

What do you remember experiencing or being taught about separate but equal? We have come a long way since separate but equal. How has African Americans benefited from the changes of such laws? What other changes do we need to see? How are you making the best of the changes in the laws?

