

Why I, WPC's Lead Pastor, affirm our denomination's statement that 'Black Lives Matter' for Reasons that are Biblical.

A lot of people are asking the question, "Don't *all* lives matter?" these days. Now, that sounds reasonable, right? Who can object to that? Wouldn't Jesus say, "All Lives Matter?"

Good question! But please stop for a moment to look with me at Luke 15. In Jesus's famous parable of the lost sheep, there are 100 sheep and one goes missing. We're not told how the lost sheep got lost—he may have been chased off by a coyote or even by the other sheep. And that doesn't matter to how much the shepherd longs for—and looks for—the one who is lost. Does the shepherd say – "Let's let him go. There are 99 other sheep here we need to guard." Strangely, no. Instead, he leaves the 99 there in the wilderness (with the coyotes howling) and he goes after the one who is having the roughest time in life and calls for special looking after. The others complain – "What about us? What about us? Don't you care about us?"

Of course the shepherd (Jesus) cares about ALL the others. However, there is one who is in huge trouble and needs particular attention – the one who is experiencing especially difficult circumstances.

Right now the same shepherd who went after the lost sheep would all those who face racial injustice and racial marginalization in his tender arms; and all the others like them who have been killed or abused, and he would offer comfort and hope.

The gospel of Jesus, as is made clear in his parables, is complex. This is not easy stuff. But then life isn't easy and it isn't easy for different people in different ways. Martin Luther King Jr., in his "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" (see the link to it below) issued a challenge to the churches of his day—and ours: "Far from being disturbed by the presence of the Church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the Church's silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are." The parable of the lost sheep calls us to imagine the union of all the sheep together in care and love—to work for the way things could be rather than the way they are.

Grace and abundant Peace to us all for these times,

Pastor Scott Dalgarno

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/why-presbyterians-affirm-black-lives-matter/>

https://www.csuchico.edu/iege/_assets/documents/susi-letter-from-birmingham-jail.pdf