

Bystander=Oppressor

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Reflections from the author

I will begin by discussing who my audience is. My audience consists of white people who do not agree with racism but who choose not to stand up for African Americans. The topic of oppression is very heavy on my heart, and I am sure that every other African American would say the same thing. I am tired of my fellow brothers and sisters feeling as though they are “less than”. I know oppression bothers all of the white people who I am close to. I am asking for white people to stand up and do more than just be upset. It is essential to do more than to just talk about how bad oppression is. A change won't be made until someone stands up and makes a difference. I know when white people stand up and use their voice in order to defend, not just African Americans, but all minority groups, then it will have a big effect and create change. In this poem, I talk about how people try to justify oppression or ignore it. Some people act as though oppression does not happen. There are people who choose to be ignorant about the issues and oppression in society, but will believe their perspectives are correct. One must have the willpower in order to cause a change of heart on serious issues such as this one. I am showing white people they have an opportunity to be heroes and to be forever remembered for their acts of love and compassion.

What if I told you that oppressing isn't the way to be living?

What if I told you that being a bystander wasn't really your mission?

What if I told you that bystander means oppressor, and you could let go of fear and allow your voice to be this nation's treasure?

I mean if oppressing is so bad, then why do you choose to remain silent? Why do you sit back and refuse to bring social justice to its highest? It tells young black men that they don't have the same rights as the old white lady in the store, but that would only mean that there was no point of the Constitution ever being born.

Oppressors might preach racism, but another thing they practice. Tend to kill innocent black people, it's even led by the police captain. The privileged won't continue to feel comfortable with no other whites to uphold them, opening their eyes because someone who looks the same has opposed them.

See the problem with the justice system is that it never brings justice; then they look at the black folks as if we're the ones who can't be trusted. Let's take a walk to the store, it should be nice and safe, nevermind cuz it isn't a guarantee that our kids will return from going outside just to play.

No I'm not mad at you, I'm just saying quit sitting on the sideline. Go on the football field to take a knee and give my guy Kaepernick a high five. We know that in this "free" country, liberty is like a frown. It's running to home plate with no one there and the umpire still declaring you out.

See this used to be me as well. I was afraid of other people's opinion. Then I got to the point where I had gotten tired of the white man's dominion. Every day you get on Twitter and state Trump is wrong while thinking that hidden emails are any worse than putting up a wall.

You spent your whole lives watching your peers be hectic, and now you can change this country no matter who takes the credit. If oppression is water, then America should be an ocean. It's not a country for free people, but for white terrorists who are broken.

You don't have to hide your feelings; you don't have to hide your compassion. It doesn't require a war, but it does require your consistent action. When you grow old and your grandchildren find out about your empathetic plan, then they'll continue the legacy of lending any race a hand.

They will learn to hate oppression and do anything to bring it to an end. MLK's dream will fully be complete when they call all black folks a friend. Let me be clear, I love this country, I love all people, but it just isn't reciprocated, and that is why we need white people to stop this insurmountable amount of hatred.

Remember we were enslaved and hung by white men; but can you tell me there's really that much of a difference between now and then? Now let's get back to the point, cuz there's something that's vital to mention. Bystanders and oppressors stand on the same spectrum. One is based on hatred, and one is based on fear. One makes all the noise, while the other turns a deaf ear.

Bystanding says "stay", oppression says "hate". Bystanding says "wait", oppression says "fun". Bystanding makes you useless while oppression makes someone bleed. Bystanding makes you cry, but oppression makes you scream.

Bystanding and oppression are one in the same. Oppression is about hurting a different colored man, and bystanding is standing idly by instead of lending a helping hand. This is why I choose to wake all of you up, because in the end our pain spills from the same cup. I know it's not all the same, but I remember we all rode on the same bus.

That is why our civil rights leaders chose to make a difference even knowing the price they would have to pay. I am not asking you to hate in return, but if anything, I am asking for you to show grace.

While being persecuted on the march to Selma, Dr. King chose not to be cruel. He wasn't just thinking about "us", but he was also thinking of "you". He took all of the worldly views of how to handle hate and threw them away in the trash. If he were alive today, he would be putting black and white together on his hashtag.

So for bystanding and oppression, I hate it. In fact, I literally resent it. Because when you finally understand Dr. King's "I have a dream" vision, I hope it will stir up some urgency in you to take a knee and to finish his mission.