

How we mourn

By [Brian Bantum](#)

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The new year is only a few weeks old. Like most people I have been reflecting on the past year, wondering where the time went. But even more, I have been wondering what the world has come to.

In the grand arc of our century, or even the past few centuries, the year has perhaps been no worse than others. But I have been wondering what feels different about it, especially in American life. Perhaps it is the solidarity of Palestinians and Kurds with those who are courageously protesting police brutality throughout America. Perhaps it is the clarity that tear gas and riot gear provide in showing how racialized violence is not a thing of America's past. Perhaps it is the seeming imperceptibility of the structures that make such circumstances possible. No longer a society with explicit laws of segregation, we segregate and incarcerate more effectively than at any other time in our history.

In a time of greater technological connection, we are more racially isolated. In the midst of this Epiphany season, how do we imagine the revelation of Christ to those beyond Israel? How will we begin to see our brokenness? How will those who are repeatedly rendered invisible be made visible, their worth declared and justice demanded?

But even more, what will we begin to do each day to prepare for those fateful days when, in our towns or cities or neighborhoods, we are confronted with the tragic and violent realities of the world? I wonder if we are reading and coming to understand the systems of our society, if we are developing the eyes to see the subtle ways it is permeated by division and inequality. I wonder if we will understand the world

sufficiently to not fall prey to easy answers to tragedies hundreds of years in the making.

As we consider what our lives will look like this year, will we consider how our mourning, our marriages, our buying and selling are aspects of what God is doing in our midst? As I reflect on 1 Corinthians 7, I believe we have to confess, "Yes. And now, how can I have eyes to see? How can I mourn as though I am not mourning?"