



The Voting Rights of 1965

By Brother Noah Howell

Day 29
March 27, 2023

Read Acts 1:23-26

“So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.”

Critical Race Fact!

The United States government compounded the psychological harm experienced by African Americans by permitting the torture and murder of black citizens. Feral and state official’ inaction communicated that no democratic institution valued Black citizen’s lives enough to protect them against terrorism by local officials and private citizens alike. “They had to have a license to kill anything but a nigger,” explained one African American man from the Mississippi Delta. “We were always in season.”

Today’s Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the great sacrifice that others made so that we have the right to vote. Help us to never take the power of the ballot for granted. Help us to vote with discernment and determination. In Jesus name, amen.

Last November, I walked into City Hall to vote for the first time. Everyone around me was excited for me and happy that I was voting. Had it been 57 years earlier I would not have been able to cast my ballot. For you see, even though African Americans had been given the right to vote under the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution, had the Voting Rights Act of 1965 not passed, I still would have been prevented from voting. The Voting Rights Act aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

I am grateful for the sacrifice and struggle of the generations before me that fought first for freedom and the temporary reprieve from the restriction of voting rights that followed the civil war and lasted the duration of the Reconstruction Period, before again falling to racist segregationist who put in place poll taxes, literacy tests, and other restrictions that prevented black people from voting.

It took countless protests, riots, and global pressure to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Now, nearly 60 years later, the voting rights of black people around the country are once again under threat, this time from voter roll purges and gerrymandering reducing the impact of voters. It is important to take the lessons learned from half a century ago. We must not let our rights be taken again. We must preserve this landmark for generations to come.

Questions to Ponder

1. Do you remember the first time you voted?
2. What made it so special?
3. How do you respond to those who say their vote doesn’t make a difference?
4. How do you encourage others to vote?

