



March 26, 2025

A Note from Pastor April

Dear Friends,

This week, I offer you another lamentation written by British poet Benjamin Zephaniah.

(<https://benjaminzephaniah.com/>) As we turn our focus this week on the theme of social justice, I am convicted once again by the words of John Wesley:

“The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.”

~John Wesley, Preface, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*



Krista Tippett’s *On Being* website writes: “Zephaniah’s urgent, imperative poem ‘To Michael Menson’ was written when he was a poet in residence at a human rights barrister in England. His poem resonates with his repeated calls for justice for a murdered Black musician — not a justice that is gullible, impotent, or hopeless but one that is clear-eyed, collaborative, and mighty.” (<https://onbeing.org/programs/benjamin-zephaniah-to-michael-menson/>).

I hear the words of this skilled Black poet, musician, and community advocate who passed away in 2023 as a lament for the larger social injustices of our day and the longing we are all feeling for justice that too often is delayed.

Notice your own response as you read his words. Perhaps give yourself some space to reflect and jot down some thoughts as you prepare for worship on Sunday. One of the things we will do at the start of the service is create some space for each person to name one word or phrase that speaks to the lament that they are feeling right now.

TO MICHAEL MENSON

Benjamin Zephaniah, *Too Black, Too Strong* (Bloodaxe Books, 2001).

“There must be some light somewhere
There must be a true other,
There must be more than despair
There must be more my brother,
There must be so much unsaid
There must be an informant,
There must be some truth ahead
There must be a judgment.

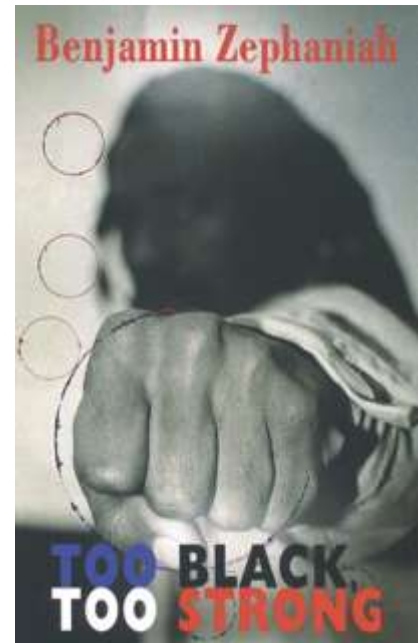
“There must be a little hope
There must be a truth culture,
There must be ways for us to cope
There must be a just future,
There must be somewhere to go
There must be some movement,
There must be much more to know
There must be a judgment.

“There must be ears for our appeal
There must be some progress,
There must be a better deal
There must be more than dis mess,
There must be ways, there must be means
There must be some acknowledgement,
There must be honest go-betweens
There must be a judgment.

“It may take God, it may take man
It may take lords of fire,
It may take burning Babylon
It may take something higher,
It may take bad rebellious youth
It may take a sane government,
It may take liars with the truth,
But there must be a judgment.”

(<https://bookshop.org/p/books/too-black-too-strong-benjamin-zephaniah/13956318?ean=9781852245542&next=t&affiliate=10066>)

In lament, prayer, and hope,



Pastor April



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