

**“CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL MINISTRY:**

 **DOING WHO I AM”**

 **Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send, And who**

 **will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8**

**Teaching, Preaching and Reaching for**

 **Transformation and Liberation**

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**WHO I AM – WHY I AM – WHAT I DO**

August, 1619, 400 years ago, our ancestors came here as cargo, and began a brutal life of servitude as slaves. They were denied their freedom, they were denied their humanity, they were denied their culture and they were denied any opportunity f ever hoping to acquire those things. They were recorded among the assets on the plantation with the livestock, and were treated with less compassion than the horses. On many plantations, they worked from ‘can’t see to can’t see’ (sunup to sundown), and they generally worked six days a week.

Although President [Abraham Lincoln](http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/abraham-lincoln) issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, 158 years ago, which made known that all enslaved people in [Confederate states](http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/confederate-states-of-america) “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free,” in reality, it did not immediately free any slaves.

On December 6, 1865, 156 years ago, slavery was officially ended (that is, on paper). It was the day the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. For the next several months, many of our ancestors left the plantations with nothing except the clothes on their bodies (which in many instances were rags). Although free, our ancestors would live the next 100 years suffering through and struggling with Jim Crow Laws, legal segregation, lynchings, ‘separate but equal’ doctrines, disenfranchisement in voting, Black Codes (limiting rights of former slaves), inhumane treatment, and every form of vile and despicable treatment one could imagine.

The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the United States Constitution were passed in order to abolish slavery and to establish the rights of former slaves:

**13th Amendment (1865)**

**Section 1.** Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall

have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction (authority).

**14th Amendment (1868)**

**Section 1.** All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge (limit) the privileges or immunities (rights) of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction

the equal protection of the laws.

**15th Amendment (1870)**

**Section 1.** The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Nevertheless, some whites continued to restrict the freedoms and trample upon the rights of Blacks in this country with a myriad of other forms of prejudice, discrimination, bias, bigotry, and racism.

Why am I sharing this? First, to remind us, lest we forget, where we have been and out of what we have come to get to where we are. Second, to encourage us as we continue on this journey into 2020 [2021] to know **Who I am, Why I am and What I do**.

**WORK FOR THE WEEK**

**FEBRUARY MEMORY VERSE**

**12**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. **13**And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

**12**Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. **13**Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. (NLT) **Romans 6:12, 13**

**FEBRUARY MEDITATION QUOTE**

“Looking back, it is clear to me that the watchful attention of my sponsors in the church served to enhance my consciousness that whatever I did in my life mattered.”

**Dr. Howard Thurman**

**TODAY’S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:**

 Have I defined myself by my situation?

Independent of everything that you have been through, God has a plan for your life

**FOR THE YOUTH**

 You are not defined by your situation

 God hears you crying