



Congregational Read of *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents*

Facilitated groups will have their first meeting the week of Feb. 14th – some spaces are still open!

[Sign up by Feb 13th to join a facilitated discussion or writing group](#)

Quotes and prompts for reflection:

1. “Just as the studs and joists and beams that form the infrastructure of a building are not visible to those who live in it, so it is with caste. Its very invisibility is what gives it power and longevity.” (pg 23)
 - How does this passage make you feel?
2. “The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not. It is about resources—which caste is seen as worthy of them and which are not, who gets to acquire and control them and who does not. It is about respect, authority, and assumptions of competence—who is accorded these and who is not.” (pgs 17-18)
 - How do you feel about the author’s description of the hierarchy of caste?
 - If you are white, how does it feel to be called part of the dominant caste?
3. Wilkerson talks about how she began to be able to tell who was high-born and who was low-born among the Indian people “on the basis of the universal human response to hierarchy—in the case of an upper-caste person, an inescapable certitude in bearing, demeanor, behavior, a visible expectation of centrality.” (pg 31)
 - Sit with the passage for a while. Over the next week see if you can notice the characteristics she describes in interactions that you witness – first-hand, on TV, in movies, in reading, etc. Mentally change the race of the people involved and see if you can imagine the interactions taking place in the same way.