

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Frederick Douglass, an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman, escaped from slavery in Maryland and became a national leader of the abolitionist movement. He was a firm believer in the equality of all peoples, be they white, black, female, Native American, or immigrants. He believed in dialogue and in making alliances across racial and ideological divides.

At age 12, Douglass had been sent to the city to serve a couple. It was there that the wife of the couple saw to it that Douglass was properly fed and clothed, and cared for. She tutored him to literacy. When Douglass, a Christian, was hired out to William Freeland, he began to teach other slaves to read the New Testament at a weekly Sunday school. Slaves from other owners joined. Plantation owners became incensed at the slaves being educated and burst into the meeting armed with clubs and stones to permanently disperse the gathering.

In 1848, Douglass was the only African American to attend the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention, in upstate New York. It is said that he stood and spoke eloquently in favor of women's suffrage. He suggested that this would be a better place if women were involved in the political sphere.

Douglass was highly influential in government. He conferred with President Lincoln in 1863 on the treatment of black soldiers serving in the Union Army. He conferred with President Johnson on the subject of black suffrage. After the War, white insurgents quickly arose in the South. Vigilante groups, including the Ku Klux Klan, the White League, and the Red Shirts were formed. There was an effort to disfranchise Black voters. Douglass continued his efforts for equality. President Hayes appointed him as United States Marshal for the District of Columbia. In 1888 Douglass received a vote for President of the United States. President Harrison appointed him as the U.S. Minister resident and consul-general to the Republic of Haiti and Charge d'affaires for Santo Domingo. On February 20, 1895, Douglass attended a meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington D.C., where he received a standing ovation. He returned home and shortly afterward died of a massive heart attack. He was buried from the Metropolitan AME Church. He is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York.

*Lord, we give thanks for people who act as you would act. Amen. Pastor Louise*