Meet: Howard Thurman

Howard Thurman was a pastor, teacher and theologian who lived from 1899–1981. Thurman's theology was primarily concerned with the question of who Jesus was and what his life and ministry meant for those who were suffering under oppressive forces. He wrote extensively about spiritual life, deep discipleship and the church. His thinking shaped the ministry of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

King carried Thurman's book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, with him as he traveled around the country for the civil rights movement. In *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Thurman teaches how Jesus' life and ministry provided a new path forward.

What, then, is the word of the religion of Jesus to those who stand with their backs against the wall? There must be the clearest possible understanding of the anatomy of the issues facing them. They must recognize fear, deception, hatred, each for what it is. Once having done this, they must learn how to destroy these or to render themselves immune to their domination. In so great an undertaking it will become increasingly clear that the contradictions of life are not ultimate. The disinherited will know for themselves that there is a Spirit at work in life and in the hearts of men which is committed to overcoming the world. It is universal, knowing no age, no race, no culture, and no condition of men. For the privileged and underprivileged alike, if the individual puts at the disposal of the Spirit the needful dedication and discipline, he can live effectively in the chaos of the present the high destiny of a [child] of God.

**Watch:** The Legacy of Howard Thurman: Mystic and Theologian
[player.pbs.org/viralplayer/1742346982](player.pbs.org/viralplayer/1742346982)

**Read:** *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
[amzn.to/2GhGkS6](amzn.to/2GhGkS6)

**Reflect:** How do you see the ideas of *Jesus and the Disinherited* in King's ministry?

For more free resources on The Rev. Dr. King’s influences and legacy, please visit [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](www.unitedmethodistwomen.org).