

Use “The Scene” to introduce “When Storms Come” the High School Sunday school lesson for June 14, 2020. The lesson is found on page 11 of *High School Teacher* by 21st Century Christian.



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Just 719 words. Not much at all, in comparison to most statements and certainly the pages and pages of laws we get from the government these days. And yet those words, penned by Abraham Lincoln as an executive order, created space for a giant step to be taken toward recognizing the equality and worth of human beings who were at the time considered property.

The Emancipation Proclamation granted freedom to any persons being held as slaves in territories that were then in rebellion against the union of the United States. And though it was limited in scope, the processes and thinking it gave strength to would eventually lead to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States—the amendment which abolished slavery.

One of the limitations of the proclamation was a problem of the time in which it was written, and that was simply that there was a lack of easy communication across the wide expanse of states that were then part of the country. This lack meant that it took some time before slaves in all the Confederate states heard that they were free. On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger and thousands of troops marched to Galveston, Texas, with the intent of announcing both the end of the Civil War and the end of slavery in that state. Almost 250,000 slaves in Texas were completely unaware of their new status at the time.

Juneteenth is a day set aside to remember that historic moment and to celebrate the end of slavery. And though it is 155 years later, we can see clearly in the words and acts of people during the last few weeks that we have a long way to go still in communicating to one another the equality and worth of every human being. But great movements can begin with small moments, just as a couple paragraphs can set hundreds of thousands of men and women free.

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**What do you think about this story? Have you ever heard of Juneteenth?**

**What do you think about what is going on in the world right now with regard to the protests calling for fairness and justice toward people of color? Do you think protests have any power?**

**Words—even just a few of them—can change people, communities, and whole nations. Words have power. What words and phrases mean something to you from the ones you have heard in the news lately?**

**Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords, and His Word has more power than any ones uttered by humankind. With just a few words, He taught people about powerful things such as love, forgiveness, and mercy. Small moments can cause crazy change in our lives, but today we’ll learn and be reminded of what a difference it can make to know who really is in control.**

