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Dr. King's message was that any evil or injustice left unopposed will easily prevail with lasting consequences for the whole of society. Those who recognize the wrong in society, who fail to speak out and act, are indeed culpable with the triumph of evil, and are certainly not innocent. King, as his religious education and training suggest, believed in the soul, and that man's soul would not survive the failure to act in the face of injustice. King's words constituted a clarion call for all people to stand up for what they know is right. However, he didn't exactly succeed.

In contemporary times, minorities at every income level live in poorer neighborhoods than do whites with comparable incomes. Along with residential segregation, comes access to fewer resources for those in minority neighborhoods. This shouldn't be surprising due to the fact that White Americans held more than 88 percent of the country's wealth in 2010, according to a Demos analysis of Federal Reserve data. The racial wealth gap didn't come about by accident, no, capitalizing on black families' inability to access reasonable and fair opportunities and/or systems is not an accident -- it is simple exploitation solely for the benefit of the white man. Of course, there were outcries and protest, but more often than not, the privileged remain silent and leech off of rich, lucrative, and oppressive capitalism.

As early as preschool, Black students are punished more frequently, and more harshly, for misbehaving than their white counterparts. Black children represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment, but 42 percent of the preschool children suspended once, and 48 percent of the preschool children suspended more than once, a Department of Education report noted. A study

published this year found that participants estimated Black boys to be older and less innocent than white boys of the same age. Young white men with felony convictions are more likely to get called back after a job interview than young Black men with similar qualifications and clean records, a 2003 study published in the American Journal of Sociology found. Black men receive prison sentences 19.5 percent longer than those of white men who committed similar crimes, a 2013 report by the U.S. Sentencing Commission found. In state prisons, African-Americans are incarcerated at 5.1 times the rate of whites. Maryland has a prison population that's 72 percent Black. This may seem shocking, horrific, unfair, and unnecessarily complicated, however, that's the system: shocking, horrific, unfair, and unnecessarily complicated.

It is evident that silence is common and part of our culture. Respect and understanding, values that Dr. King cherished, are simply not present. It will always be difficult to accumulate understanding within diverse groups, but in America, the complacent white majority makes no attempt. America has chewed up and spat its soul out, and turned to unspeakable and systemic forms of inhumane treatment to fill the void.