



"And now I am no more in the world,  
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance  
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®  
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

### **HAS ANYONE BEEN LISTENING?**

Ferguson, Missouri, has been in the news again. During a protest marking the first anniversary of the shooting of black teenager Michael Brown by police, a state of emergency was renewed in the area. Violence escalated after police shot and critically wounded another black teenager who allegedly fired on police.

Fifty years ago this month, a routine traffic stop of a black man for reckless driving in Los Angeles spiraled into the Watts riots, the most deadly civil disturbance in L.A. history. Some critics question whether authorities have been listening to minority complaints over the last half-century. On the other hand, many believe both sides need to address the issues more effectively.

### **THEY REFUSED TO PAY ATTENTION**

In Zechariah's time, there were authorities in Israel who had refused to pay attention to prophetic calls to deal justly with the poor and oppressed. When God's judgment came down on the nation, the leaders cried to God for relief. But their cries fell on divine ears that were deaf to them. As a result, Israel was scattered among the nations.

1. Why is racial justice still an issue a year after Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, or for that matter, fifty years after the Watts riots?
2. List some steps you believe are necessary to defuse racial tensions. Why do you think that even Christians do not always agree on how best to resolve these issues?
3. What is your church doing to be an instrument of reconciliation in society?
4. In what ways are you personally listening to God on this matter? What difference has it made in your life?

—Charles R. Boatman

<http://www.standardlesson.com/downloads>

Copyright © 2015 by Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, OH. All rights reserved.  
Each download is for the use of one church only.