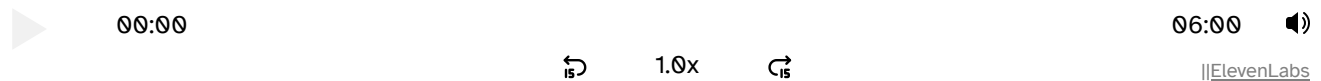


## Opinion: Resurrection, remembrance and the work ahead

By [G. Scott Morris](#), Special to The Daily Memphian

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SPECIAL TO THE DAILY MEMPHIAN

**G. Scott Morris**



The Rev. Dr. G. Scott Morris, M.D., is founder of Church Health. He is a regular contributor to The Daily Memphian.

This Sunday carries a convergence of sacred memory and moral responsibility Memphis cannot afford to ignore.

It is Easter Sunday — the day Christians proclaim resurrection, the triumph of life over death, hope over despair.

[Hill: Thanks, Raptors, for showing how you spend a random Thursday in Memphis](#)

And as also happens, the Christian Easter falls during the days of the Jewish Passover celebration, the ancient story of liberation of a people delivered from bondage into the

promise of freedom.

It is also the day after we mark the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. here in Memphis in 1968. Our city's soul has never fully healed from this wound, but every year we look ahead.

Three narratives, one shared truth: Suffering is real, but it is not the end of the story.

Memphis knows suffering. We have lived it in ways both public and private. The balcony of the Lorraine Motel is not just a historical site; it is a mirror we still struggle to look into and see the reality staring back.

King came to Memphis to stand with sanitation workers — men demanding dignity, fair wages and recognition of their humanity.

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Opinion: Memphis must demand more from industrial polluters

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His death here forces us to ask even now: How far have we come, and how far do we have to go?

There is no denying Memphis has changed since 1968. We have seen growth, revitalization and moments of genuine progress.

Downtown has been reborn. More opportunities exist, and more voices are at the table. Cultural institutions thrive.

But progress is not the same as justice. The inequities King spoke against — poverty, racial division, unequal access to health care, education and economic opportunity — have not disappeared. They have simply taken new forms.

The sanitation workers' cry of "I am a man" still echoes in the lives of those who feel unseen, unheard or left behind.

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In recent days, our city has also been the focus of national attention.

During his visit to Memphis, President Donald Trump praised the work of the Memphis Safe Task Force and suggested the problem of crime in our city has in effect been solved.

We should welcome any progress that makes our neighborhoods safer. Every life protected, every act of violence prevented is something to be grateful for.

Public safety matters deeply; it is foundational to human dignity and community well-being.

But we must also speak truthfully. Crime is not a problem that can be declared solved for political convenience. It is a condition shaped by deeper realities — poverty, trauma, lack of opportunity, broken systems — that cannot be addressed by enforcement alone.

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[City, county want input on new zoning plan](#)

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Memphis knows this. We see it in our neighborhoods, emergency rooms, schools and streets.

At Church Health, where I have worked for nearly four decades, we see it every day in our exam rooms and our patients who work hard but are still left behind by the U.S. health care system.

To suggest the work is finished risks turning our attention away from the work that still lies ahead.

And yet, Easter and Passover insist despair does not get the final word. The message of resurrection is not sentimental. It doesn't deny suffering; it passes through it.

The stone is rolled away not because the world has become perfect but because hope refuses to remain buried.

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Resurrection is a call to action. It is an invitation to participate in the making of something new.

Passover tells a similar story. Liberation is not a one-time event; it is a journey. Freedom must be remembered, retold and recommitted to in every generation. The work is never finished.

What then might Memphis become if we take these truths seriously — not only in our sanctuaries, but in our policies, our priorities, our public life?

We could become a city where safety isn't measured only by crime statistics but by whether every child has a real chance at a future.

Where health care isn't a privilege but a shared commitment.

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## Martin: Memphis makes staff hires official, plus some rumblings around college basketball

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Where neighborhoods aren't divided by opportunity but connected by it.

Where prevention stands alongside enforcement as an equal priority.

We could become a place where remembrance leads not to complacency but to purpose.

The temptation, of course, is to treat anniversaries as moments of reflection only — to look back, to mourn, to commemorate.

But the convergence of this weekend doesn't allow us that luxury. Easter calls us forward. Passover calls us forward. The legacy of King calls us forward.

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Memphis stands, as it did in 1968, at a crossroads. We can choose complacency, believing progress is sufficient and the hardest problems are behind us. Or we can choose the more demanding path that requires sustained commitment, honest assessment and a willingness to do more.

Hope is not naive. It is costly. It demands something of us. But it is also the only path that leads to the city we are capable of becoming.

This Sunday as churches fill with songs of resurrection and families gather around tables remembering freedom, may we also remember our unfinished work.

May we honor King not only with words but also with action. And may we believe — truly believe — that even here, even now, new life is possible.

That is the promise of Easter. That is the freedom of Passover. That is the challenge of Memphis. And that is the work before us.

#### TOPICS

G. SCOTT MORRIS   EASTER   PASSOVER   DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

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