

Daily Devotion For January 18, 2021

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48

Today we remember and celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Jesus said that anyone can love those who love them in return. What distinguishes people of God is the way we treat those who oppose us—our enemies. Just as God shows love to everyone, so are we to show love to everyone. Matthew 5:43-48 is a fitting scripture for the day we honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The key to the life of Martin Luther King Jr. is found in his Christian faith. He responded to violence with nonviolence, to hate with love. Dr. King was always looking toward reconciliation after the battle, because his approach was grounded in the gospel. He wrote, “It was the Sermon on the Mount, not a doctrine of passive resistance, that inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to social action. It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred [them] with the creative weapon of love.”

Thought For Today: Martin Luther King Jr. recognized that the heart of the gospel proclaims that love can really change a situation of conflict and enmity: love reaching out toward the oppressor, love pushing negotiation, love offering forgiveness and newness. It wasn't that he lacked an appreciation for the persistence and power of evil. It was rather his faith. He believed that the intolerant and prejudiced sheriffs and politicians were sheep who had strayed from the fold, who had the potential to be converted. Take time today to think that however powerful evil is, love is more powerful.

Today's Prayer Focus: Thank God, for the witness of Martin Luther King Jr. Pray for racial equality and social justice to rule and reign in our hearts and in our nation. Select a few prayer points from this week's updated prayer fuel. Deo Volente.