

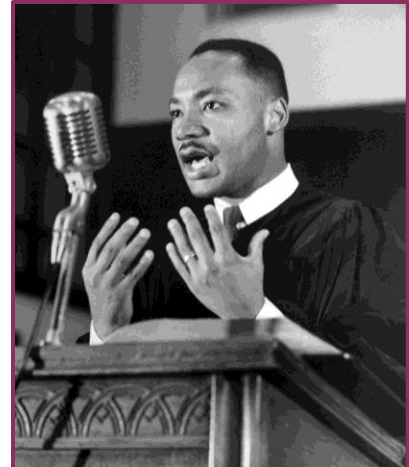
Wisdom from Dr. King

This is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and an appropriate time to consider his legacy and the wisdom he shared.

King, a Christian minister and activist who became the most visible spokesman and leader in the civil rights movement, is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, at the age of 39.

Two months before his assassination, King spoke to his congregation at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta about his death in what would oddly enough become his eulogy.

“Every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral,” he told his congregation. “If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don’t want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize, that isn’t important. Tell them not to mention that I have 300 or 400 other awards, that’s not important.



“I’d like someone to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I’d like someone to say that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to love somebody. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that I did try, in my life, to clothe those who were naked. I want you to be able to say that I did try to visit those in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.”

And then Dr. King concluded with these words: “I won’t have any money left behind. I won’t have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.”

Did King have that level of commitment when he first began his ministry? It’s doubtful. He had youthful enthusiasm, to be sure. He had strong convictions. He was well brought up, with an outstanding Baptist preacher as a father.

But people who are truly captured by the spirit of Christ do so generally after years of walking in Christ’s footsteps. Dr. King’s words speak truth to us today, just as they did on the day of his utterance.

Our faith is validated and grows as we follow our Lord Jesus’ example and His teachings.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter