



Teaching, Preaching and Reaching for  
Transformation and Liberation

## “CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL MINISTRY: DOING WHO I AM”

Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:

THE PASTOR’S PEN 

January 17, 2021

For the next few weeks, I will share previously printed Pastor’s Pens (with minor edits). This week’s reprint is from March 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Please pay close attention to the second paragraph and Dr. King’s thoughts regarding “The fierce urgency of now.”

### EXCERPTS FROM DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING’S SERMON TITLED, BEYOND VIETNAM: A TIME TO BREAK SILENCE

April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York City

This call for a world-wide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all men. This oft misunderstood and misinterpreted concept -- so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force -- has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Moslem-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: *Let us love one another; for love is God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked and dejected with a lost opportunity. The "tide in the affairs of men" does not remain at the flood; it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on..." We still have a choice today; nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation.

We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world -- a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter -- but beautiful -- struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message, of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

As Dr. King presses us regarding “the fierce urgency of now,” we must affirm and agree that now is the time for us to be and do who we are, and we do not have time to waste. Jesus pressed us similarly regarding the fierce urgency of now in The Gospel of John, Chapter 9, Verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. John 9:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. John 9:4 (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. John 9:4 (NLT)

In this passage of scripture, Jesus makes it clear that there will come a time when it will not be feasible nor practical to accomplish the work that the Father has for us to do. Why? Because it will be too late. Many are familiar with the phrase, “Time and tide wait for no one.” We must fulfill the assignments given to us while we yet have the light of day in which to work.

The word ‘night’ is the Greek word ‘*nyx*’. The word means night as in nighttime, however, the word also applies to the time when work ceases, and the time of death. The ‘night’ of life comes in ways and times that are unexpected and unanticipated. Who can predict when the night of life will fall? Who can determine how much time they have and coordinate their lives to fulfill their work up to the last seconds of life? We often delay our plans and are slothful in the execution of our assigned tasks believing that we have time – “I can complete it on tomorrow.” “I can do it later.” Nevertheless, night will come, and our work will remain undone.

Jesus, therefore, encouraged us to work while it is day. The word ‘day’ is the Greek word ‘*hēmera*’. The word means day as it relates to the time period between sunrise and sunset. However, it also incorporates the understanding of ‘while it is day’, that is, while life gives one an opportunity to work. Jesus encouraged us to work while life gives us the opportunity. Our elders would say, “While the blood is running warm in your veins.”

I believe that every day that we wake up is intentional. Every day that we wake up is an opportunity for us to fulfill a reason for God waking us up. Since everything that God does is purposeful, there is a purpose for each day that God wakes us up and gives us life. Let us look forward to living each day to the fullest and working our hardest while life gives us the opportunity.

## WORK FOR THE WEEK

### JANUARY MEMORY VERSE

<sup>8</sup> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." **Isaiah 6:8**

### JANUARY MEDITATION QUOTE

"One spoke to me one day and said, 'Now Dr. King, don't you think you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy. I understand that your position on Vietnam has hurt the budget of your organization. And many people who respected you in civil rights have lost that respect and don't you think that you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy to regain this.' And I had to answer by looking that person into the eye, and say 'I'm sorry sir but you don't know me. I'm not a consensus leader.' I do not determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of my organization or by taking a Gallup poll of the majority opinion. Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

### TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Because people do not understand you does not mean that there is something wrong with you

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Do not limit God's unbelievable possibilities in your life to what others can understand \_\_\_\_\_

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### FOR THE YOUTH

Because people do not understand you does not mean that there is something wrong with you \_\_\_\_\_

Do not limit God's unbelievable possibilities in your life to what others can understand \_\_\_\_

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