



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 6:8

THE PASTOR’S PEN 

February 14, 2021

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WE MUST STAND

Following is an excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his Letter from the Birmingham Jail. Dr. King is responding to an open letter written by Alabama clergy asserting that his methods were unwise and untimely:

There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example, they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

Below, I will highlight a portion of that excerpt:

There was a time when the church was very powerful – in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.

Two thousand years later, many who consider themselves to be leaders are simply *thermometers*. They only record and recount the issues and concerns of the community. They only restate the obvious and remind us of what we are already aware of. They are satisfied permitting people to remain who they are and conditions to remain as they are.

- “Young ladies with children are out here struggling.”
- “Our youth are going down the wrong path.”
- “Our neighborhoods are dirty, houses are deteriorating and no one cares.”
- “Our schools are in need of an overhaul.”
- “Yes, he should not have permitted that to happen in his gas station...” (from the pastor who acknowledged the obscene act and refused to open his mouth to condemn the one who permitted it.)

Dr. King encouraged us to be *thermostats*. He encouraged us to be those who transform the mores of society. He also reminded us, “... the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed.” They understood that being a thermostat meant suffering. They understand that being one who seeks to transform meant sacrifice. They understood that those who desire to make their family, their church, their community, their school, their place of employment, their environment better must be willing to give something of themselves to accomplish it.

Our responsibility is not to make people comfortable where they are. Our responsibility is to press, encourage and support people in doing their most, their greatest, their best – to fulfill their calling for God. And, if we must sacrifice being liked, being supported, large crowds, generous offerings, many volunteers to do God’s will, so be it.

Dr. King shared at the National Labor Leadership Assembly for Peace in 1967:

*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.***

As you are prayerfully and meditatively considering your responses to the questions, “What is **our/my** prophetic witness?” and “Where is **our/my** prophetic voice?” I ask that you continue to prayerfully and meditatively consider your honest responses to the following questions as you open yourself in availability to and for God.

1. Who am I?

- ✓ Begin with “I am”
- ✓ Not your role (father, mother, etc.). Not your occupation (teacher, plumber, etc.). Not your gifts (singer, writer, painter, etc.). For example, Jesus said “I am the Son of God”

2. Why am I here?

- ✓ God is not coincidental nor accidental. Everything that God created was for a purpose
- ✓ God created me on purpose. God created me with a purpose

3. Why did God create me the way that God created me?

- ✓ God is not coincidental nor accidental. Everything that God created was for a specific purpose
- ✓ God created me on purpose. God created me with a purpose. God created me for a specific purpose

4. How is God re-creating me (that is, remolding and reshaping me to conform more and more to my purpose)?

- ✓ Read Jeremiah 18:1-6
- ✓ As God is remolding and reshaping me, I know that I am in God’s hands

5. What am I doing now to prepare myself to fulfill my purpose?

6. Have I started doing what I am supposed to do to fulfill my purpose?

7. If I could spend the rest of my life doing or talking about one thing, what would it be?

8. My life experiences has rendered me an expert at something. At what am I an expert?

9. What do I really enjoy

10. What do I dislike?

11. What makes me feel alive?

12. What is my legacy? / What will I be known for after I die?

WORK FOR THE WEEK

FEBRUARY MEMORY VERSE

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

¹² Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. ¹³ Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. (NLT) **Romans 6:12, 13**

FEBRUARY MEDITATION QUOTE

“Looking back, it is clear to me that the watchful attention of my sponsors in the church served to enhance my consciousness that whatever I did in my life mattered.”

Dr. Howard Thurman

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Do I believe because I see or do I see because I believe? _____

Are you waiting for visible, physical, and tangible evidence to believe? _____

FOR THE YOUTH

How do you believe in something that you do not understand? _____

Have you ever believed in something without visible, physical and tangible evidence? _____
