

*"Even though we face the
difficulties of today and tomorrow
... I still have a dream."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

 Harper Christian Resources



SHARE THE DREAM SUNDAY

SERMON OUTLINE

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I. Introduction

The date was August 28, 1963. The place was Washington, DC. A crowd of more than 250,000 Civil Rights supporters had gathered outside the Lincoln Memorial, filling the area around the reflecting pool and out toward the Washington Monument, to take part in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his *I Have a Dream* message that day and his legacy began.

Dr. King, and other courageous men and women of his day, were able to change history through the power of a dream rooted not only in human principles but also in God's love for all humanity. In other words, there was a spiritual dimension to the early Civil Rights Movement. This becomes especially evident when you learn the spiritual backstory of what Dr. King and others were able to achieve.

Ambassador Andrew Young, one of Dr. King's closest confidants in the Civil Rights Movement, stated they were only able to overcome the incredible violence, threats, and legal and political opposition that they faced on all sides "by the power of the Spirit." He went on to explain, "We would be planning to go to Place A for a rally. But someone would have a dream the night before telling us to go to Place B. So, in obedience to the dream, we would go to Place B. And there would be a bomb at Place A that would have taken out the whole Civil Rights Movement in its infancy. When that happens to you . . . you learn to be led by the Spirit."

In many ways, this sounds like a description of the early church. Despite the violence and persecution they faced, "those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:4). The first believers were led by the Spirit, and as a result, the church continued to grow day by day. Ultimately, Christianity transformed the Roman Empire itself.

Most of us today would agree that we need that same power to overcome the growing darkness and violence in our world. We need the Holy Spirit to guide us, work through us, and empower us to transform our communities, cities, and nations for Christ.

Dr. Martin Luther King and other courageous men and women were able to change history through the power of a dream that was not rooted in merely human principles.

Dr. King's dream was rooted in the love of God for all humanity... for all His children made in His image . . . In other words, there was a profoundly spiritual dimension to the early Civil Rights Movement.

A. Love

Dr. King was often called an "extremist" when he gave speeches like *I Have a Dream* or participated in marches for civil rights. It's a word that carries a lot of baggage. Depending on the context, it might even describe someone who is capable of acts of mass violence or terrorism.

Almost always in Dr. King's case, the term "extremist" was intended as an insult. But he took this baggage-laden label and flipped it on its head. Here's what he had to say in a letter written from the Birmingham jail:

"... though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter, I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' ... So, the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love?"

What is love ... *really*? And as followers of Christ, what does it mean to be people of love? Or, in the words of Dr. King, what does it mean to be *extremists for love*?

The word "love" may be the most overused, ambiguous word in the English language. We use it to express how we feel about thin-crust pizza or our favorite movie. *And* we use it to express our deepest affection for other people.

So let's look at what the Bible says about love. First, put simply, "God is love." God's very nature is love. Therefore, everything He does flows from love.

John puts it this way: "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." (1 John 4:16)

To "live in love" suggests something more active than simply having pleasant feelings toward others. To "live in love" is to think, speak, and do for the good of another. God demonstrated His love for us by *doing* the most extreme act in human history: He died the death of a common criminal, all while we were still sinners!

Second, the Bible tells us that God's love does something. In 1 Corinthians 13, Apostle Paul writes that "Love is patient, love is kind ... it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

Love does things! All the other virtues—conscience, justice, freedom, perseverance, hope—

they all exist as byproducts of love.

So Love must be the foundation of every effort to heal and restore racial relationships.

We're living in challenging times. A glance at your news feed confirms that! The lines that divide people are thick with fear and division—division along lines of politics, race, culture, and socioeconomic status.

But God's love in us has the power to do things nothing else can! It alone has the power to mend people and communities fractured by hate.

B. Conscience

Many experts agree that our society is more divided today than at any time since the Civil War. Racial tensions. Social unrest. Violence on the streets of our urban centers. Massive political polarization. Continued social and economic fallout from the global pandemic—the melting pot is boiling over.

We are the body established by Christ to bring the healing grace of the gospel to our fallen world.

It's time to reach out and join with our brothers and sisters of different backgrounds, political viewpoints, and skin color who belong to that beautiful *counter-cultural reality* known as the *body of Christ*. Now is the time to learn from the wisdom of those who have walked the journey before us.

And now is the time to invite the Spirit of God to reshape our broken reality. As followers of Christ, we need to respond to things we know are wrong and live as people of *conscience*.

In the context of Scripture, *conscience* is the inner witness of our hearts about what is right and wrong in light of God's truth and righteousness.

Have you ever been with friends who want to do something you know to be wrong? Have you felt the tension in your heart?

Maybe you've been part of a conversation where people have said ugly things about people of another race. Did you join in even though it didn't feel right? Did you feel guilty later?

That was your *conscience* speaking to your heart.

Maybe people you've been with have used words that demean another's race to make themselves feel superior. Did you feel like saying something to stop it but didn't because you didn't want to stand out?

That was your *heart* deciding not to listen to your conscience.

Our consciences play a key role in helping us to do what is right. A weak conscience often yields to the cultural norms of selfishness, segregation, or prejudice. A strong conscience has the courage to put into action Jesus' command to love our neighbors of all races and backgrounds as ourselves.

We need to remember that because of sin, our consciences don't function well automatically. Before we trusted Jesus for our salvation, our consciences were like a weak battery in a car. Sometimes they worked. Sometimes they didn't. Sometimes they were too weak to do their job.

But because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have been given a new and clean conscience that can gradually become more and more powerful as the energy of God's Word and of the

Holy Spirit are at work in us.

When Christ died on the cross, His blood became the only sacrifice we need. Through Him, our conscience can be made pure!

The writer of Hebrews explains it this way: “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:4, NIV)

With a pure conscience, we can choose to stand for what is right in the face of racism. We can listen to our consciences and seek to bridge the canyon of hate between races with the love of Jesus. We can follow in the footsteps of the brave men and women who over the centuries have done just that!

Dr. Martin Luther King life’s work of nonviolent resistance to racism and discrimination was rooted in the Gospel.

For Dr. King, following his conscience meant doing the right thing before God—even if that meant doing the wrong thing in man’s eyes—even if it meant breaking the law peacefully.

So, was Dr. King saying that we can break any law we’d like as long as we feel it is the right thing to do?

Not at all. Dr. King made a crucial distinction between civil disobedience and anarchy. Here’s what he had to say: “In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law ... That would lead to anarchy.”

As followers of Jesus, how will we respond? What causes do we believe in deeply enough to act on? Will we let our silence betray our conscience? Or will we speak up, listen well, and make the tough choice to, like Jesus, love our neighbor as ourselves?

The book of James states that if anyone “knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them” (James 4:17 NIV). As followers of Jesus, are we going to be people who do the good we know we should be doing? Are we—like Dr. King—going to stand up when we see an injustice being committed? Are we going to be people of conscience?

Each day, we are given opportunities to stand up for what is right. When those moments come, we have to follow our conscience, get off the sidelines, and choose to speak up and act.

C. Justice

On September 18, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, delivered a eulogy for four children murdered in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The bombing had taken place three days before on Sunday morning. As the congregation rose for prayers, they were knocked to the ground by the blast wave from a bomb planted under the steps of the church. The four children killed were in the basement preparing to take part in the church’s Youth Day celebration.

In that moving Birmingham eulogy, Dr. King didn’t speak about the murder of innocent children in a spirit of vengeance. He didn’t even focus on punishing the guilty. Instead, Dr. King talked about responding to this grave injustice with hope. Hope that good would come from this monstrous evil. And hope that the hearts of the evildoers would change. That may sound noble . . .

but was his response a just one?

The cornerstone to the idea of justice is the truth that every human being is created in the image of God—the *Imago Dei* in Latin. The beautiful reality that is foundational to justice is the truth that every human being is *inherently* and *immeasurably* valuable.

In the simplest terms, the word “justice” means “to make right.” The writer of Psalm 89:14 declares to God, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.”

These two words—“*righteousness*” and “*justice*”—are paired often throughout Scripture. “Righteousness” is right-ness, specifically in relationships, and “justice” is to make right.

So, to act justly is to take wrong situations or broken relationships and make them “right” again. Because every human being is *inherently* and *immeasurably* valuable, to act justly is to make right any relationship in which any human being is treated as less valuable than another.

Definitions for justice diverge into two main categories. The first category is called *retributive justice*. Retribution is a punishment or payment for wrongdoing. Therefore, retributive justice is all about making a situation right by having the guilty party suffer punishment for what he or she did. Under Old Testament Law, those found guilty of a crime were required to pay back a “life for a life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth ...”

The prophet Jeremiah describes it this way: “This is what the LORD says: ‘Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.’”

Restorative justice seeks to make right broken relationships and hurt people by helping them return to the place of value and worth that God intended.

The most compelling example of *restorative justice* in all of Scripture is the life and teaching of Christ. During the first century, Jews in Israel were living under Roman military occupation. They were overtaxed, mistreated, and oppressed in every way. For centuries they had waited for the promised Messiah, a king who would save them from their oppressors. They expected a mighty military leader who would crush their enemy with violent force and give the Romans what they deserved. They only expected *retributive justice*.

But Christ came teaching a broader definition of justice that includes both retributive and restorative justice. He describes a future day of judgment when everyone will give and account for their actions and receive either eternal blessing or eternal punishment—that is *retributive justice*.

He also spends a lot of time teaching about *restorative justice*. In the Gospel of Luke, Christ quotes Isaiah in speaking about His plan of restorative justice:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” -- Luke 4:18-19

(NIV)

Christ fulfills the requirements of the *retributive justice* by taking upon himself the punishment that is warranted not only for the Roman oppressors but ultimately for the wrongdoing of the entire world. When Christ asked God to forgive those who were crucifying him, he was asking for forgiveness not only for the Roman soldiers but for all of humanity.

Jesus is fully righteous and just. We are not. On the cross, He willingly took on our punishment, the punishment retributive justice says we deserved, so that we don't have to. As a result, if we repent of our sins and accept the precious sacrifice that he made on our behalf we can have our relationship with God restored to what it would have been if we had never sinned. He died so that we can live. He is the creative solution. Jesus is the divine embodiment of both retributive and restorative justice.

D. Freedom

The *quest for freedom* is woven into the fabric of the *human spirit* and *human experience*. Across time and cultures, freedom is recognized as a fundamental human right.

Dr. King had this to say about freedom:

"There seems to be a throbbing desire, there seems to be an internal desire for freedom within the soul of every man . . . It might not break forth in the beginning, but eventually it breaks out. Men realize that, that freedom is something basic. To rob a man of his freedom is to take from him the essential basis of his manhood. To take from him his freedom is to rob him of something of God's image."

In another sermon, Dr. King put it this way:

"There is something deep down within the very soul of man that reaches out for Canaan. Men cannot be satisfied with Egypt."

That quote captures Dr. King eloquently invoking a long tradition where African Americans drew lessons from their struggle against slavery and segregation in America from the story of Israel.

Early in Scripture, we see God's people "groaning" under the weight of slavery in Egypt.

"... the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God."

God heard their groaning, He remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac, and He sent Moses to deliver them from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the land He had promised.

Throughout the Old Testament they ping-ponged back and forth between freedom and captivity.

Yet there was one relentless oppressor that succeeds in enslaving every generation. That oppressor was sin.

All of us are slaves to sin. And God's answer to our spiritual slavery is Christ.

Through His death on the cross, Jesus—Who never sinned—became our ransom. His life was

the price of our freedom!

Jesus says, “Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

God created us for a life of freedom as His sons and daughters. He etched into every human heart the longing for freedom.

Slavery directly opposes God’s will and design for humanity. Slavery breaks His heart.

From a historical perspective, slavery in America legally ended at the conclusion of the Civil War. In 1868, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution gave Black Americans equal protection under the law. In 1870, the 15th Amendment gave Black American men the right to vote. But even with these laws, there were many in the country who wanted to deny Black Americans their fundamental human rights to freedom.

On December 1, 1955, a 42-year-old woman named Rosa Parks took a seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She had complied with the city’s segregation laws and was sitting in the seats designated for Black passengers at the back of the bus. But then a white passenger got on the bus and couldn’t find a seat in his designated section. So the bus driver approached Rosa and told her and three other Black passengers to give up their seats for him. She refused—and was arrested.

Rosa Parks’ stand against this injustice would serve as the spark that would ignite the Civil Rights Movement. Black community leaders soon after formed the Montgomery Improvement Association, selecting a Baptist minister named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as its leader. This role would place Dr. King in a prominent position in the fight for civil rights.

The Civil Rights Movement initiated an ongoing journey for the justice and equality of minorities in America that continues to this day. But modern forms of slavery—in the form of human trafficking—continue to exist. Though different in many ways, at the core of both racial discrimination and human trafficking is the tragic reality that the fundamental human right to freedom has been denied.

Victims of human trafficking are forced into grueling labor with little or no compensation and are subjected to unthinkable physical and sexual abuse. Most live in fear, threatened with injury or death if they try to escape or get help.

Think about what you can do today to act in the love of Jesus, break the bonds of slavery, and bring about freedom in this world. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking that what you can do is too small or insignificant to make a difference. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the Montgomery bus, she had no way of knowing that her action would spark a movement.

The enemy wants you to believe that your actions don’t matter. But the truth is that when you make yourself available to God, He will accomplish amazing things that you never dreamed possible. As Jesus once said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18:27 NIV).

E. Perseverance

Individuals like Dr. King and Rosa Parks were runners in a race that started long before them. The middle of the story is filled with thousands of unnamed heroes who all had one thing in common. . .

they persevered.

Perhaps no word better describes the quiet middle of history's greatest stories than that of "Perseverance."

What is perseverance? And as a follower of Jesus living in today's social and political climate, what does it look like to be a person of perseverance?

Perseverance and patience are sometimes used interchangeably, but there is a fundamental difference between the two: Patience *waits*, while perseverance *acts*. And while patience is a good thing (Paul even lists it as a "fruit of the Spirit!"), it is not the same thing as perseverance.

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." – Hebrews 12:1-3

There are few things more active than a race! No one ever wins a race by waiting passively at the starting line. They win by actively moving forward, by persisting. They win by persevering.

Dr. King wrote his now-famous letter from the Birmingham jail to a group of white clergymen who had urged him to put a stop to acts of civil disobedience taking place in that city. After witnessing decades of vile injustice enacted upon African Americans, Dr. King's patience had run thin. This is what he said: "There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair."

Dr. King was done waiting. He had been threatened, imprisoned, separated from his family, and would eventually be killed. But the way he and other Civil Rights leaders saw it, they had two options:

- Throw in the towel and resign to the status quo . . .
- Or persevere. Press forward with renewed, persistent, unceasing efforts.

Fortunately for America and our world . . . They chose option two.

Each of us faces hard things in life. In fact, Christ even said, "In this world you will have trouble."

This has been a tough season for a lot of us! A worldwide pandemic added financial burdens, health stress, political division, social unrest, racial tensions ... just surviving some days feels like a victory! But like Dr. King, we have two options.

When we choose option two, we're not alone! Right after Christ said we will have trouble, he said, "*But take heart for I have overcome the world!*"

When we invite God into our hard days, He may not always immediately change our circumstances, but He can change something inside of us.

Listen to what James writes: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face

trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. *Let perseverance finish its work* so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Perseverance isn't just something we do. Through grace, it does something to us! When we persevere in difficult times, it changes us. Over time, perseverance causes us to mature.

When this season transitions to the next, when the headlines that plague today's news cycle are nothing but a memory, who will we be? Will we be *people of perseverance*?

It might be as simple as speaking up when you hear someone put down another person based on race or gender or socioeconomic status. Then speaking up again. And again.

It might be calling attention to an injustice that you see in your community and then motivating your friends and neighbors to act . . . and to keep on acting until the situation changes.

It certainly will involve you taking the matter to God and persisting in your prayers. Jesus once told a parable to his followers to show just how God wanted them to approach Him with their requests.

In the story, a widow kept coming before a judge to plea for justice against her adversary. Jesus said that the judge “neither feared God nor cared what people thought” (Luke 18:2 NIV). So, for quite some time, he refused to hear her pleas. But eventually, the woman's persistence wore him down. He said, “because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice” (Luke 18:5 NIV).

Jesus concluded His story with this point: “Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, *he will see that they get justice, and quickly*” (Luke 18:7–8 NIV).

Now may we, like so many before us, hold unto the truth that our God is victorious. And may we persevere!

F. Hope

On the evening of April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stepped out of his room on the second floor of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, to speak with some colleagues. He had arrived in the city the previous day to prepare for an upcoming march, and one of his engagements in support of that event was a speech at Mason Temple. Death threats were a daily reality for Dr. King, and as he stepped onto the stage that night, he seemed particularly reflective. Listen to what he said:

“If I were standing at the beginning of time ... and the Almighty said to me, ‘Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in? ... I would ... say, ‘If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy.’ ... Now that’s a strange statement to make because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around ... But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars ...”

The day after Dr. King delivered these words, he was martyred. He was struck by an assassin's bullet as he stepped out onto the balcony of the hotel. Aides sprang to his side. Others

pointed across the street to where the shots originated. Dr. King was rushed to the nearest hospital, where he died an hour later.

Nearly 2,500 years before Dr. King stood in front of that crowded church in Memphis, there was a Jewish girl whose world also appeared dark. At this time, the Jews were a conquered people living in exile in the Persian Empire. After the king of Persia deposed of his wife, a type of contest was held for who would be her successor. Trafficked away from the only family she had, Esther was brought to the Persian king and made his wife. Meanwhile, an official in the Persian government plotted to annihilate the Jewish people. For Esther to confront her husband about it could mean immediate death. No person was permitted to approach the king without being summoned.

With her life and the life of her entire nation on the line, Esther's cousin Mordecai asked her these now-famous words: *"Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"*

To borrow the words of Dr. King, Esther's world was "all messed up." Yet somehow, when the night was at its darkest, Esther looked up and saw the stars.

We're also living in a dark night season. But where will we focus ... on the *darkness* or on the *stars*?

Let's be people who choose hope . . .

What is hope? Why is it so imperative to every human rights movement? And ultimately, what does it mean as followers of Christ to be people of hope?

Over the years, the word "hope" has become synonymous with "wishful thinking," but as Christians, hope is something so much more!

Implicit in the idea of hope is the reality of waiting. Hope suggests waiting with expectation.

Throughout history, God's people have hoped for that which God had promised but had not yet done. They hoped for:

- deliverance from slavery in Egypt,
- to return home from exile in Babylon,
- a Savior, a Messiah.

And every time, God came through.

Ultimately, because the Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, there will be a renewal of all things.

But until that day, we can continue to move forward because we have hope.

The writer of Hebrews describes this kind of hope as *"an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."*

During the biggest storms and the darkest nights, hope is our strong and confident expectation that God is with us, and His plans will prevail.

Throughout history, it is hope that has birthed every human rights movement.

At times when the night seemed darkest, someone dared to hope.

Just over a year after Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, the Nazis began the forced relocation of over 400,000 Polish Jews into a 1.3 square mile corner of the city of Warsaw . . . known as the Warsaw ghetto.

Two years later, the Nazis began deporting thousands of Jews at a time from the ghetto to death and forced labor camps.

The night was very dark and still many Jews living in the ghetto dared to hope that lives could be saved. The brave Jewish men and women in Warsaw knew military victory was unlikely. But sometimes hope is less about the certainty of measurable victory and more about knowing that what you are doing will ultimately make a difference for the greater good.

As Dr. King wrote in his letter from the Birmingham Jail, "*... right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.*"

As followers of Jesus, our hope isn't merely theoretical. It isn't wishful thinking. Our hope is a certainty that one day the dignity of every man, woman and child will be restored to that which God intended.

When we step into another person's dark night, we become a part of ushering in that "one day" reality.

When we give our time and resources to the cause of justice anywhere, we help push out the darkness and usher in the Kingdom of God.

This is one of the reasons why Dr. King would routinely add to his crushing schedule trips to personally support the efforts of those facing injustice. He would attend marches and endure threats, violence, and arrest . . . all so he could help shine a light of hope into the lives of others.

The Apostle Paul describes the divine mystery as being "*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*"

As Christians, the Holy Spirit lives *within* us! God Himself takes up residence in you and me!

So, if Christ is our hope, and the Spirit of Christ lives in us, then we carry the ultimate hope for all humanity within us! Christ in you is the hope of the world!

II. Application

Let's remember the good news is that we're not in this struggle alone. Dr. King said:

"I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a Loving God and that in the struggle for righteousness man has cosmic companionship. . . We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Dr. King embraced this reality, and his legacy changed our history.

Throughout Dr. King's life—and in the last public speech he gave before he was assassinated—he used the parable of the Good Samaritan as an illustration of the love, mercy, and compassion of God being extended across the boundaries of race and culture. You might recall that Jesus told the

parable in response to a religious teacher's question, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). Many people, both in that time and still today, prefer to define *neighbor* as narrowly as possible. But in his message, "I See the Promised Land" in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 3, 1968, Dr. King noted the following about Jesus' response:

"Jesus immediately pulled that question from mid-air and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man, who fell among thieves. You remember that a Levite and a priest passed by on the other side. They didn't stop to help him. And finally, a man of another race came by. He got down from his beast, decided not to be compassionate by proxy. But with him, administered first aid, and helped the man in need. Jesus ended up saying, this was the good man, this was the great man, because he had the capacity to project the 'I' into the 'thou,' and to be concerned about his brother."

Dr. King's remedy to hatred and violence was what he called "*The Beloved Community*." He had a deep belief that non-violence was more than a tactic. He viewed it as a mindset—rooted in an awareness of the *Imago Dei* in all humanity—that had the potential to stop the cycle of hatred and violence in our world.

When we come together to share the dream—in our neighborhood and around the world—we participate in the advancement of that Beloved Community that is the best hope for the survival of humanity.

Remember the words of Dr. King: "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

We live in a world that is divided. It's all too easy for us to focus on our differences and "pass to the other side" instead of bridging the gap. But Jesus calls us to be like the Samaritan in the parable who possessed a "universal altruism." We are to build networks and relationships that represent the antidote to the world's ideologies of hatred, racism, and violence. We are called to be a people who understand, live, experience, and ultimately form a community around the unifying principles at the heart of the dream to which Dr. King dedicated his life.