

## LOVE your enemies: MLK's towering example

June 28th, 2020 by Kasey Crawford

Today's Passages: **Matthew 5:43-48, Eph 2:14-15**

Is loving our enemies a small side note of Christianity or one of the core ethics of being a follower of Jesus?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. claims that Jesus' **"Love of even enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our world."**

He also writes that while some may laugh at Jesus' teachings as weak or cowardly words of an "impractical idealist", Dr. King believes Jesus "is a practical \_\_\_\_\_" who taught the only way powerful enough to bring kingdom transformation.

*"Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." -Dr. King*

Shockingly, in the midst of great opposition, Dr. King's goal was always reconciliation and \_\_\_\_\_. *"Only a refusal to hate or kill can put an end to the chain of violence in the world and lead us toward a community where men can live together without fear." -Dr. King*

Why this dream for "brotherhood"? What is his source?

*"The \_\_\_\_\_ is the eternal expression of the length to which God will go in order to restore broken community. The resurrection is a symbol of God's triumph over all the forces that seek to block community. The Holy Spirit is the continuing community creating reality that moves through history. He who works against community is working against the whole of creation." Dr. King*

This is an echo of Ephesians 2... **For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace...Ephesians 2:14-15**

Dr. King lived from the conviction that: If you are not with cause of turning enemies into friends, you are not with the full cause of Christ in this world. This is what Christians do!

**"the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community."**

How can someone love "enemies" like this?

**"We love every man because God loves him."**

He explains in his essay on *"Loving Your Enemies"* that when Jesus speaks of loving your enemies it is the word *agape* which is an: *"overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless. Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people...It begins by loving others for their sakes" and "makes no \_\_\_\_\_ between a friend and enemy; it is directed toward both"... "understanding, redeeming goodwill for all," "Agape is love seeking to create and preserve community." -Dr. King*

Dr. King lived with the conviction that agape love begins with God towards us and is then meant to flow \_\_\_\_\_ to the world and turn enemy to friend in the creation of a beloved community.

**Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:45**

**Responding to God...**

Who are the people/groups in your life who you feel don't deserve more love and goodness from you?

What would it look like to approach them with "agape" love?

Answers: realist, community, cross, distinction, out