

Perhaps it is just coincidence, though I don't really believe in coincidences, that the week of prayer for Christian unity and our remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. come together. Next Monday is the day we as a nation honor Dr. King and his work, and all the following week Christians around the world are praying for the unified body of Christ. Above all, Dr. King was a servant of God, who had a vision, a dream, that was nothing less than the kingdom of God. That is what our prayers for Christian unity are about too – the kingdom of God and its fulfillment on earth as it is in heaven.

Dr. King called us to greater faithfulness both as Americans and as people of God. There are so many great quotes of his that challenge us and hold a mirror up to let us see who we are. It can be an uncomfortable view at times. Like all prophets, King showed us who we are and who we can be. Here are some words of wisdom from Dr. King:

"Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

"We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

"Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

"We must work passionately and indefatigably to bridge the gulf between our scientific progress and our moral progress. One of the great problems of mankind is that we suffer from a poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually."

"Every man lives in two realms, the internal and the external. The internal is that realm of spiritual ends expressed in art, literature, morals, and religion. The external is that complex of devices, techniques, mechanisms, and instrumentalities by means of which we live. Our problem today is that we have allowed the internal to become lost in the external. We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live."

While it is God who will accomplish the completion of his kingdom, we are not passive as we wait; we can live as if the kingdom is a present thing, a reality in our lives.