

There is a little tree planted on a little hill and on that tree hangs the most influential character that ever came in this world.

Never feel that that tree is a meaningless drama that took place on the pages of history. Oh no it is a telescope through which we look out into the long vista of eternity and see the love of God breaking forth into time.

It is an eternal reminder to a power-drunk generation that love is the only way. It is an eternal reminder to a generation depending on nuclear and atomic energy, a generation depending on physical violence

Love is the only creative, redemptive, transforming power in the universe.

So this morning as I look into your eyes and into the eyes of all my brothers in Alabama and all over America and over the world, I say to you *"I love you. I would rather die than hate you."*

And I am foolish enough to believe that through the power of this love somewhere, men of the most recalcitrant bent will be transformed and then we will be in God's kingdom. We will be able to matriculate into the university of eternal life because we had the power to love our enemies, to bless those person who cursed us and to even decide to be good to those persons who hated us, and we even prayed for those persons who despitely used us.

Oh God, help us in our lives and in all of our attitudes to work out this controlling force of love, this controlling power that can solve every problem that we confront in all areas.

Let us join together in a great fellowship of love, bow down at the feet of Jesus, and give us this strong determination in the name of the spirit of this Christ we pray. Amen

The forgoing was spoken by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1957. Try to remember or visualize the culture in which he lived: KKK activity, racial bias, segregation on many levels, protest marches, hatred ruled! The man who spoke the words I brought died by assassination 11 years after this speech.

1) HE BELIEVED LOVE IS THE GREATEST FORCE IN THE WORLD

a) *It Truly Is For The Following Reasons:*

- i) **Love Is Eternal, Faith And Hope Are Temporal.** No faith needed then and hope fulfilled.
- ii) **Jesus Said Love Stands Alone-** [John 13:34,35](#)
- iii) **Jesus Also Said Love Sums Up All Commandments-** [Matt. 22:34-40](#)
- iv) **Love Keeps No Record Of Wrongs-** [I Cor. 13:5](#)
- v) **Love Covers A Multitude Of Sins-** [I Peter 4:8](#)

b) *To Follow Jesus One MUST Practice Love:*

- i) [Matthew 5:38-42](#)
- ii) [Matthew 5:43-48](#)
- iii) **Love's Behaviour Separates Christ Followers From Others**
 - (a) ILLUSTR: The Big Difference
 - (b) Whole Sermon On Mount Settles That

c) ***Sadly, The Only Real Alternative Is Revenge***

- i) Dr. King said, *"I love you and I would rather die than hate you."*
- ii) Revenge is strictly forbidden- NEVER is it be practiced by anyone-Romans 12
 - (a) Revenge runs contrary to what society deems right- v. 17
 - (b) Revenge does not promote peace by incites hostility – v.18

- (c) Revenge usurps a task which belongs only to God-v.19
- (d) Revenge succumbs to evil rather than overcoming it with good-v.21

CONCLUSION: *When we fail to practice love for all we can become immersed in our own sufferings and sorrows and forget others.*

Viktor Frankel, a well-known secular psychiatrist, wrote of his incarceration in a Jewish concentration camp, where he was confined to a small room. Through cracks in the boards, he could see the stairway immediately behind his wall. Hearing a thumping sound, he peered through the cracks and saw a German soldier dragging the dead body of his fellow-prisoner down the stairs. So great was his own suffering that Frankel confessed feeling nothing at all; in his own suffering, he had become isolated and emotionally uninvolved in the sufferings of his fellowmen.

ILLUST: The Big Difference

The uniqueness of Christianity stands out boldly in the way we treat our enemies. Nikita Khrushchev understood this and graphically illustrated the difference between Communism and Christianity with this paraphrased remark: ***“The difference between Christianity and Communism is great. When someone strikes you on the face, you turn the other cheek. If you strike me on the face, I’ll hit you so hard your head will fall off.”***