

Daily Devotional, January 18, 2021

'Peaceful Resistance', (Matthew 5:38-45)

““You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:38-45, NKJV)

Today we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The way we ought to do that as Christians is to take a look at the Bible principles that informed his thinking. We actually have two of those principles right here in our text. The first is love of enemies, drawn from [Leviticus 19:18](#). The second is peaceful resistance. The principle of “[an eye for an eye](#)” was designed to limit justice to equal justice under the law, and exclude retaliatory measures. Jesus taught beyond this—that we should not insist upon our own justice, bearing patiently in times of hardship and persecution. When violence begets more violence, nothing is ever accomplished. Dr. King understood this well. He persuaded men of all colors and creeds to heed his call for the dignity of all men through peaceful demonstrations and powerful speech. As a result of Dr. King’s efforts, we’ve come a long way in this country, despite the worst efforts of those who wish to exploit division along racial, ethnic, and other lines for their own political and financial interests.

If everybody would take the Lord’s words to heart, and Dr. King’s response in consideration, speaking up for what is right civilly, hearing out all parties, and doing it peacefully, we would go a long way to remedy the ills in our nation. Today, we have a situation now where millions of people feel disenfranchised, President-Elect Biden used his first speech and several subsequent speeches to attack President Trump and his supporters, and freedom of speech by conservatives is under attack. I see only disunity being preached from all sides—especially by those who have now attained to power, and no man of the hour for this time in our nation’s history. Even if there was one, many folks would not listen. But may you and I, Christian friend, be men and women of peace in our day. Like Dr. King. Like Jesus told us to be.