

"I have
a dream!"

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

But those who are ignorant of the truth do not think that these prophets are to be believed; for they say that those voices are not divine, but human.

Lactantius

**The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
and his tongue talks of justice.**

**The law of his God is in his heart;
none of his steps shall slide.**

Psalms 37:30-31

Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. We celebrate his birthday on the third Monday in January. Martin Luther King was a Baptist minister who used peaceful methods to counteract the inequalities of laws and society. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968.

PRESENCE OF GOD

We come into Your presence, Lord, and know that we are Your people. You have made us a little less than the angels and have crowned us with glory and honor. Remembering Your holy presence in us and among us, let us be imitators of Your love, joy, justice and peace for each of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit with You, Yahweh, residing in us.

PRAYER

**Lord, You granted us the great gift of freedom.
In these times, O Lord, grant that we may be free
from any form of racism or intolerance.
Remind us, Lord, that we are all equal in Your Loving eyes.**

HYMN

Refrain:

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

Nobody knows but Jesus.

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

Glory Hallelujah!

Sometimes I'm up,

Sometimes I'm down

Oh, yes, Lord.

Sometimes I'm almost to the ground

Oh, yes, Lord.

Although you see me going along so

Oh, yes, Lord.

I have my troubles here below

Oh, yes, Lord.

Why does old Satan hate us so

Oh, yes, Lord.

Cause Jesus has us and he won't let go

Oh, yes, Lord.

PSALM

**O Lord, You are a God of justice. Your judgments are always right,
Your sentences always fair. You judge all human beings according to the
standard of Your perfect righteousness.**

**Yet through Your justice You show Your tender heart for the poor
and oppressed. You see their plight. You have compassion upon them.
You work in this world to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to free the
prisoner, to liberate the oppressed.**

**When Your kingdom comes in all of its fullness,
then Your justice will be supreme over this earth.**

**In the meanwhile, Lord, You have chosen to work through us.
As Your people, we are to do justice and love kindness as we walk with You.
Help us, Gracious God, to imitate You in our living.
May we seek to loose the bonds of injustice, undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free. May we learn to share our bread with the
hungry, and bring the homeless poor into our homes.**

PRAYER BEFORE THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

**Lord, open our ears, minds and hearts to ponder Your Holy Word today.
May we allow it to change our hearts and lives.**

John 15:13–17

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another.”

Romans 13:8–10

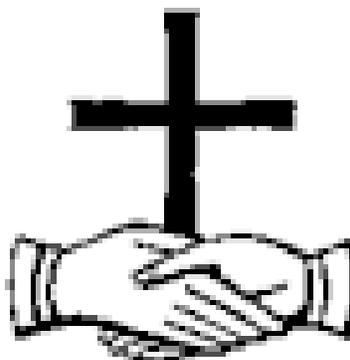
“Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,’ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

1 John 3:10,14–18

“In this way, the children of God and the children of the devil are made plain; no one who fails to act in righteousness belongs to God, nor anyone who does not love his brother. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.”

1 John 4:20–21

“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”



Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

**– Martin Luther King, Jr.,
I've Been to the Mountaintop,
a speech made the day before his assassination**

HYMN

**When Israel was in Egypt's Land,
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.**

**Chorus
Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's Land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.**

**O let us all from bondage flee,
Let my people go,
And let us all in Christ be free,
Let my people go.**

**Chorus
Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's Land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.**

**We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go,
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,
Let my people go.**

**Chorus
Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's Land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.**

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

On this day, we remember the many ways that we have discriminated against so many people. We confess our need to turn away from the sin of our prejudice, to turn toward the God of all people. This day we pray for those who have suffered oppression, of any kind.

Response: In your mercy, Lord, heal us.

For open eyes to see others as our sisters and brothers of one God Who is our heavenly Father, we pray...

For all who have suffered persecution because of their race, faith, gender, sexual identity, lack of education or wealth, we pray...

For all perpetrators of injustice, we pray...

For all who speak out against injustice, bigotry and violence, we pray...

For all who work to be God's children as peacemakers, we pray...

For us that we too, might be filled with the spirit of Jesus as Martin Luther King was, we pray...

LET US PRAY: Lord, as we gather our prayers before You, we remember Your words: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for He makes His sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?" (Matthew 5:43-46). Let our hearts be overflowing with Your love, compassion and justice so that we may touch the lives of others around us. We make this prayer in Jesus' name Who showed us how to live, to love and to give of ourselves. Amen.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

To our most bitter opponents we say: We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we shall continue to love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey unjust laws, because non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. Throw us in jail, and we will still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children and we shall still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our community at the midnight hour and beat us and leave us half dead, and we shall still love you. But be assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory.

From "Love Your Enemies" by Martin Luther King, Jr. Published by Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Institute Essay Series.

BLESSING

**If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.**

**If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.**

**If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.**

**If there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.**

Bless us, O Lord, and the work of our hands, mind and heart.

So let it be.

HYMN

We shall overcome

We shall overcome

We shall overcome some day

CHORUS:

Oh, deep in my heart

I do believe

We shall overcome some day

We'll walk hand in hand

We'll walk hand in hand

We'll walk hand in hand some day

CHORUS

We shall all be free

We shall all be free

We shall all be free some day

CHORUS

We are not afraid

We are not afraid

We are not afraid some day

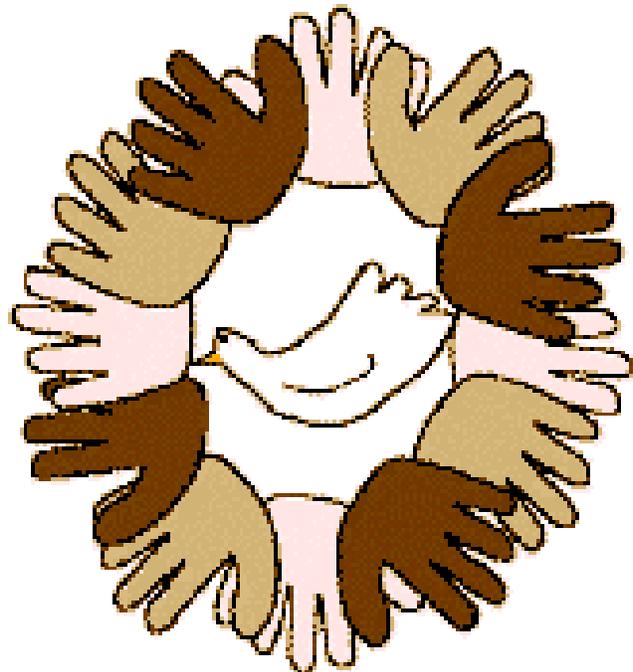
CHORUS

We are not alone

We are not alone

We are not alone some day

CHORUS



May the spirit of Jesus be always alive in our hearts.

**EXCERPTS FROM "I HAD A DREAM" SPEECH
LINCOLN MEMORIAL at WASHINGTON, D. C.
AUGUST 28, 1963**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

**My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountainside, let freedom ring!**

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

**Free at last! Free at last.
Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!³**



