



I Have Decided to Stick With Love, by Martin Luther King Jr.

I'm concerned about a better World. I'm concerned about justice; I'm concerned about brotherhood and sisterhood; I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about that, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate through violence. Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that.

And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to humankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. For I have seen too much hate. [...] and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we aren't moving wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.

And so I say to you today, my friends, that you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and angels; you may have the eloquence of articulate speech; but if you have not love, it means nothing. Yes, you may have the gift of prophecy; you may have the gift of scientific prediction and understand the behavior of molecules; you may break into the storehouse of nature and bring forth many new insights; yes, you may ascend to the heights of academic achievement so that you have all knowledge; and you may boast of your great institutions of learning and the boundless extent of your degrees; but if you have not love, all of these mean absolutely nothing. You may even give your goods to feed the poor; you may bestow great gifts to charity; and you may tower high in philanthropy; but if you have not love, your charity means nothing. You may even give your body to be burned and die the death of a martyr, and your spilt blood may be a symbol of honor for generations yet unborn, and thousands may praise you as one of history's greatest heroes; but if you have not love, your blood was spilt in vain. What I'm trying to get you to see this morning is that a man may be self-centered in his self-denial and self-righteous in his self-sacrifice. His generosity may feed his ego, and his piety may feed his pride. So without love, benevolence becomes egotism, and martyrdom becomes spiritual pride.

