

Three score and three years ago, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial,

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King delivered a speech that was

firm and prophetic, affirming and generous, sobering and clear.

At a time when slave catchers' whips had become Klansmen's sheets,

when the gains of Reconstruction had been ripped away by Jim Crow,

when Freedom Rides were stalled

by mobs, wielding bats and Billy clubs, chains and sticks,

by mobs, hurling rocks and bricks, vitriol and gasoline,

when the system of segregation legitimized the abandonment,

may the repudiation, of the image of God in human beings,

Dr. King had the abject temerity to speak about his dream,

a dream that was quintessential, not quixotic;

urgent, not unrealistic; personal, not philosophical.



Over the years, many have co-opted and appropriated,

many have warped and bastardized, many have twisted

and tried to wring the righteous challenge out of this dream.

Yet, Dr. King's dream persists, because, although, he, the dreamer,

was flawed, his dream came *from* God.

Dr. King's dream persists, because it points *to* God -

in faith and hope, in freedom and love.

Dr. King's dream persists, because, like our Gospel this morning,

this dream stubbornly insists that we re-center ourselves at the margins

there to find Jesus, calling us to a radical presence that manifests God's dream.



In our Gospel this morning, seized by messianic dreams  
and a vision of the Lamb of God on the banks of the river Jordan,  
two disciples of the John the Baptist could not help but follow Jesus.  
They had only just met him, but these disciples  
would believe whatever he said, do whatever he asked,  
and follow wherever he led,  
because, as our Bishop has said,  
“genuine encounters with God generate movement.”  
Movement *toward* God. Movement *with* God. Movement *for* God.  
Genuine encounters with God generate movement.



Notice what happened when the two disciples followed Jesus.  
Consider what Jesus did when he noticed the two disciples following him.  
Jesus addressed and did not ignore them.  
Indeed, Jesus asked them a question, “What are you looking for?”  
In this way, Jesus affirmed their humanity.  
When the disciples replied, Jesus listened to them  
not assuming what they wanted but really hearing what they needed.  
In this way, Jesus affirmed their agency.  
And upon hearing what they needed, to be with him, to be where he was,  
Jesus welcomed them, *complete strangers*, into his home,  
and Jesus *demand*ed that they *open their eyes*.  
In this way, Jesus gave them purpose with three little words.



Jesus said to them, “Come and see.”

Come and see. Come and see. Come and see.

It is an invitation to a radical presence

with renewed discipleship and discernment at its heart.

Come and see.



We need disciples who will follow Jesus in the way of Love  
that reveals God

who accompanies and does not abandon,

who welcomes and does not exclude,

who offers hospitality not intimidation,

who embraces compassion not avoidance,

who is peace and shuns violence,

who offers mercy not domination,

who forgives sin and offers grace for transformation,

who is love and is never indifferent.



We need disciples who will follow Jesus in the way of Love . . . and see.

See with open eyes and open minds and open hearts

that for freedom God in Christ has made us free.

Freedom from fear and apathy and sin. Freedom from prejudice.

Freedom to love. Freedom to acknowledge and advocate.

Freedom to pray and protest. Freedom to show up and speak out.

Freedom to disagree and still collaborate.

Freedom to reject lies and embrace truth.

Freedom to reject evil and choose good.

Freedom to embarrass the divisions on which the powers  
and principalities depend.

Freedom to choose mercy and sue for justice.

Freedom to be radically present

to God, to one another, to our neighbors and siblings  
in faith and hope, in freedom and love,  
in these troubled times

when the treasonous intent of January 6<sup>th</sup>  
has become the domestic terrorism of ICE,  
when masked men haunt our streets  
and detain our siblings.



Truly I tell you, as Dr. King said on the eve of his assassination,

“We’ve got some difficult days ahead.”

In these troubled times,

we may have to accept social disorder as the price for social change;  
we may have to accept discomfort, disquiet, even death,  
as the price for spiritual renewal;

we may have to accept revolution as the price for restoration.

In these troubled times, we need disciples who are committed  
to following Jesus in the way of Love

and discerning the true nature of the freedom Jesus brings and  
who trust in God's dream of an ever widening, expanding family.



Beloved, I am persuaded that,

if we meet these times with faith and hope, in freedom and love,

we shall overcome because we shall face our fears,

we shall overcome because we are not alone,

we shall overcome because the truth will make us free,

we shall overcome because we'll walk hand in hand.

we shall overcome because the love of God is the greatest power.

Deep in my heart, I do believe that we shall overcome someday,

with God's help.

Amen.