

Racism Reflections – July 27, 2020 John Lewis & Martin Luther King, Jr. NSMC Dan Graber
A call to holiness and wholeness

Since the death of Elijah Cummings and especially John Lewis, and this week, Charles Evers, Businessman and Civil Rights Leader, I've been wondering what works best for a reflection. And of course they were heavily influenced and worked with Martin Luther King Jr. There is so much information about all four men, that's it's difficult to choose what to share. And then I ran across these two YouTube videos – that received my full attention.

So please watch them all the way through - the Batiste one first, and then the Stephen Colbert one. Watch undistracted. There is some repetition, but it's worth it!

Then enjoy and take time to ponder these quotes by Martin Luther King Jr.

Next, pray about racism. Be thankful we have inspirational people like these in our life time. And it's not just blacks and whites. Every culture, race, language group and country has its own forms of racism – in many different but similar types of ways.

Maybe God offers us Covid-19 to wake us up, once again to racism and the disparities of our economic system. It seems to me the two go hand in hand. So if we want to be holy – we have our internal and external work cut out for us.

“But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.” 1 Peter 1:15

Lastly, ask yourself, which Canadians can you name that we can lift up as positive examples?

Barbershop stories with Jon Batiste and Congressman John Lewis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCHBi030TMM>

A crowd surfing American Hero: Remembers Congressman John Lewis
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a89_-7o5gH4

MLK, Jr. Quotes about racism and justice

“A riot is the language of the unheard.”

“I plan to stand by nonviolence, because I have found it to be a philosophy of life that regulates not only my dealings in the struggle for racial justice, but also my dealings with people, and with my own self.”

“I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”

“I slept and dreamt that life was joy.

I awoke and saw that life was service.

I acted and behold, service was joy.”

“The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

“Seeing is not always believing.”

“The time is always right to do what is right.”

“The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice.”

“There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed.”

“To be Negro in America is to hope against hope.”

“I have decided to stick with love. hate is too great a burden to bear”

“Free at last, free at last. Thank God almighty we are free at last.”

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

“Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it.”

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”

“Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

“Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.”

“Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”

“Every man must decided whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

“When you are right you cannot be too radical; when you are wrong, you cannot be too conservative.”

"It is incontestable and deplorable that Negroes have committed crimes; but they are derivative crimes. They are born of the greater crimes of white society."

"A right delayed is a right denied."

"History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people."

"Any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion awaiting burial."

"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."

"It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important."

"A nation or civilization that continues to produce soft-minded men purchases its own spiritual death on the installment plan."

"The Negro needs the white man to free him from his fears. The white man needs the Negro to free him from his guilt."

"Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal."

"He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

"Ben, make sure you play 'Take My Hand, Precious Lord'. Play it real pretty", are said to be the last words of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, just before he stepped out onto a balcony in Memphis, Tennessee where a gunman shot him a single time, ending his life half a century ago. April 4, 1968.

"If physical death is the price that I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive."