

Hearing Dr. King's voice today: 6 favorite quotes from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was only 39 when he was struck down 50 years ago this spring. I look at my life and wonder how he fit so much into 39 years. He was a minister, a speaker, an activist, a father, a husband, a man of God with such deep vision and courage and insight.

Everyone knew what he stood for—and he changed hearts and minds.

One way to get a glimpse into King's life is by reading his words. If you haven't read it lately—or at all—you might like to spend a few minutes with King's "I Have a Dream" speech. It is so powerful.

Here are a few of his many quotes that speak to me:

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

"Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase."

"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

"We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of

racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children."

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

I believe in the power of words. Words can hurt, and words can heal. Words can divide people or build bridges. Words can exclude or include. I hope through King's legacy we can find the courage to speak words of justice, words of hope, and words of love—and to live lives that reflect that.