



The Kingdom Perspective

The Optimism of the Civil Rights Movement

Hello, this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

At our cultural moment we are in desperate need of optimism, and there is no better place to turn for that than historic Christianity. Christianity is an optimistic religion.

Now, don't get me wrong. Christianity does not turn a blind eye to the reality of evil. It does not tip toe around the ugliness of sin, the seriousness of hell and the judgment to come. As a matter of fact, it tells us that the world is not the way it's supposed to be. Our world is fallen and corrupted by sin—every inch of it! The Apostle Paul calls it “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:3). You see, the Bible doesn't naively assume that what is, ought to be. And that's precisely the point; it tells us that there's a new world coming, in which all sin will be judged and all evil banished. Justice will roll down like a mighty river (Amos 5:24).

In large part, it is this optimistic vision that drove the 1950s and 60s Civil Rights Movement. Remember, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. He was not merely a civil rights leader. He was first and foremost a Baptist minister.

The night before he was assassinated, King preached his now famous “I've Been to the Mountain Top” (1968) sermon at a church in Memphis. In it he calls for unity, economic and social reforms, and for the American nation of that time to live up to its stated Christian ideals.

Now, people perhaps can debate about the best policies for implementing Dr. King's vision. However, the Christian optimism that drove him to live and die for this hope, must not be a matter of debate. Rather, it must drive us all at the very core of our being.

The Bible gives us a view from “the mountain top”—a vision of a world yet to come, as well as a vision that also should inform how we live in the here and now.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

~ **Revelation 21:5-8 (ESV)**

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