

# A Man of Peace: King's stand against war

From "Beyond Vietnam,"  
April 4th, 1967:

"A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, 'This way of settling differences is not just.' This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

"We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood--it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, 'Too late.' There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: 'The moving finger

writes, and having writ moves on.'

"We have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace...and justice throughout the world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight...

"And if we only make the right choice, we will be able to transform the pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

From his last sermon at  
Ebenezer Baptist Church on  
April 30, 1967:

"Don't let anybody make you think God chose America as his divine messianic force to be a sort of policeman of the whole world. God has a way of standing before the nations with justice and it seems I can hear God saying to America 'you are too arrogant, and if you don't change your ways, I will rise up and break the backbone of your power, and I will place it in the hands of a nation that doesn't even know my name. Be still and know that I'm God. Men will beat their swords into plowshafts and their spears into pruning hooks, and nations shall not rise up against nations, neither shall they study war anymore.' I don't know about you, I ain't going to study war anymore."

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was shot by

*A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.*

-- Martin Luther King Jr.

James Earl Ray while on the balcony of a Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He was only 39 at the time of his death. Dr. King was turning his attention to a nationwide campaign to help the poor at the time of his assassination. King had never wavered in insisting that nonviolence, inspired by Ghandi, must remain the central tactic of the civil-rights movement, nor in his faith that everyone in America would some day attain equal justice.

PEOPLE MARCHED FOR IT.  
RODE THE BUS FOR IT.  
WENT TO JAIL FOR IT.

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*Use it!*



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