

7 Words of Christ MLK Built His Ministry On

Read Time: 5 Minutes 6 Seconds

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. followed the example set by our Messiah on the cross to heal the soul of this nation through non-violent civil disobedience. His strategy had been proven by the King of kings on the cross.

Yes, the cross still has power. Let us take up our crosses, as Dr. King did. "Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me,'" (Luke 9:23, NIV).

When we examine the seven words of our Messiah on the cross, we find the model He set, the model that proved effective when employed by Dr. King, the model we need to address division and destruction in our nation today.

Let us examine the seven words now.

1. Commit to the Way of Peace – We cannot incite peace around us if there is no peace within us. The first Word of Yeshua (Jesus) on the cross is found in Luke 23:34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The way of peace starts with a continual attitude of forgiveness. That leads to peace within.

Dr. King said, "One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means." I forgive; therefore I have peace; therefore I incite peace.

2. Trust God at All Times – Yeshua's second Word on the cross was to the thief hanging with him, "Today, you will be with Me

in paradise” in Luke 23:43. One thief went to paradise because he had faith. In his “I have been to the mountaintop” sermon, delivered one day before he was murdered, Dr. King concluded with these words, “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land! And so I’m happy tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man! Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!”

Hebrews 3:12-4:2 speaks of those who didn’t enter the promised land, and there’s a greater promise for us. Dr. King was our Moses, and he went to paradise the very next day. But where is Joshua, the one who takes God’s people into the promise? We are the ‘Joshua Generation,’ come to usher in the millennial reign of Messiah. We must demonstrate our faith by laying down our lives of convenience and putting down our walls of self-protection for God’s will to be done in the earth.

3. Minister Reconciliation – Yeshua’s third word on the cross was to His mother saying, “Woman, behold your son,” and to John, “behold your mother,” in John 19:26-27. Malachi 4:5-6 (NIV) tells us that the spirit of Elijah reconciles parents to children. “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.” This is reconciliation. God has given us a ministry of reconciliation, according to 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. The way of peace, that continual forgiveness, is essential to reconcile people to God and each other.

4. Accept Persecution for the Triumph that Follows – We must know persecution to experience triumph or victory. Yeshua’s

fourth word on the cross was “My God, My God. Why have You forsaken Me?” in Matthew 27:46. He said those words to send us to Psalm 22 and reveal the path to victory—it’s through persecution! We must learn to persevere through persecution and worship Him in the midst of it in Psalm 22, to truly see God as our Shepherd in Psalm 23 and have the authority to welcome the King of Glory in Psalm 24.

Dr. King said, “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!” the day before he died, after the police dogs, the hoses, the countless arrests, threats on his family, death among his supporters and disciples. He saw the glory after all this. We must lay down our lives, and let Him raise us up.

5. Refuse Bitterness – The fifth word Yeshua said on the cross is “I thirst.” John 19:28 tells us that they offered Him wine and He took it. However, Matthew 27:34 tells us that when they offered him wine mixed with gall, which is bitter, He refused to drink it. Yeshua refused bitterness, regardless of how thirsty He was, because He knows it only increases thirst.

We all thirst for freedom, peace, equality, safety, acceptance and affirmation. In his “I have a dream speech,” Dr. King warned us by saying, “Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.” When we thirst only for God and refuse bitterness, then will we be able to share our living water with the dry, thirsty world.

6. Fulfill the Great Commission – The sixth word Yeshua said on the cross was “It is finished” in John 19:30. In that moment, He had completed all of the current tasks assigned to Him, but there was more work to do. This is why He commissions us in Matthew 28:18-20. Dr. King was committed to fulfilling the Great Commission. Hear his words now: “Like the early Christians, we must move into a sometime hostile world armed with the revolutionary gospel of Jesus Christ. With this powerful gospel we shall boldly challenge the status quo.”

The gospel was Dr. King's weapon, with which he opposed societal ills and ministered healing to the wounded soul of this nation. The Good News must also be our weapon against evil, not each other.

✖ **7. Focus on our Final Reward** – Yeshua's seventh and final word on the cross was, "Father, into Your hands, I commit My spirit" in Luke 23:46. There is a final reward for us, and that reward must be enough. If we overcome fear, persecution and division, we will be with God forever! We'll be joined by the great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews chapter 11, of whom the world was not worthy. Dr. King is among them.

We are the 'Joshua Generation,' who are called to take God's people into the promised land, by ushering in the millennial reign of Messiah. Dr. King, our Moses, has gone on to glory, so a new generation must rise up. We are almost there! "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them" (Josh. 1:6). {eoa}

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