



When a king decrees forgiveness as a law of his realm, that law must be written on his subjects' hearts, for one is powerless by nature to obey such a law when it is only written on a stone tablet or parchment scroll. A heart must first be transformed by love to be empowered to forgive (Deuteronomy 29:4; 30:6, 14).

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood this truth deeply. Believing that the higher law and practice of forgiveness—embodied in Christ at Calvary's cross—paves the way to overcoming every evil, Dr. King implored others to be transformed by beholding Christ's "aggressive love" in his sermon, "Love in Action":

The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of revenge... In spite of the fact that the law of revenge solves no social problems, men continue to follow its disastrous leading...

[But] Jesus eloquently affirmed from the cross a higher law. He knew that the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy would leave everyone blind. He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good. Although crucified by hate, he responded with aggressive love.

What a magnificent lesson!... [O]nly goodness can drive out evil and only love can conquer hate.

—King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Strength to Love*. Kindle edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019, 34–35.

As we reflect on Dr. King's inspiring words, sacrificial work, and transformative legacy, let us heed his charge. Today, tomorrow, and in the days to come, as we mourn the profound losses wreaked by the recent wildfires and search for the hope and strength to rise from the ashes they have wrought, let us hear our Heavenly King's clarion call:

Behold the sacrificial love of God!

Be transformed by God's magnificent love!



His love empowers us to forgive out of the abundance of transformed hearts (1 John 4:7-21). His love sustains us so that we may bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of God, which is to love (Galatians 6:2). By the love of God—made manifest through transformed hearts—we prevail over every evil, overcome every tragedy, and unite in the bond of heaven's harmony (1 Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 3:14).

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you"
(Ephesians 4:32).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

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All Bible verses from the English Standard Version.



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