



## January 14, 2024 - Martin Luther King Jr – Epiphany of Community

Lest we think God only gives wisdom and insight to “Bible People”, this week we will look at the epiphanies God gives us through the person of Martin Luther King. A man whose vision of a “beloved community” is perhaps one of the biggest epiphanies we all need to embrace. Come this weekend and discover more about God’s illuminating in our world even today!

### Scripture:

#### I John 4:7-12, 17-18a The Message

My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn’t know the first thing about God, because God *is* love—so you can’t know him if you don’t love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they’ve done to our relationship with God. <sup>11-12</sup> My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home, and matures in us, so that we’re free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ’s. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear.

#### Matthew 5:43-48 NLT

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. <sup>47</sup> If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. <sup>48</sup> But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

### Questions:

- Pastor Jane talked about Martin Luther King’s vision of “beloved community” today. What do you think of this idea? Do you think it is possible? What parts of it resonate with you?
- How often do you “cancel out” love because you know you can’t love perfectly like God does? Look back over today’s texts and create a vision for yourself of what it means to truly love someone according to scripture.
- What part might you play in bringing God’s idea of “beloved community” into reality today? Are you willing to step out in order to do this? What makes you pause or hesitate? Admit that to God and ask for strength to overcome your own fears and blocks.

### Reading for the Week:

**Monday:** Isaiah 41:10

**Tuesday:** Deuteronomy 31:6

**Wednesday:** Psalm 46:3-1

**Thursday:** Romans 8:28-30

**Friday:** Psalm 56:3-4