

Reading for Virtual Compline

Brent House

January 20, 2021

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "When Peace Becomes Obnoxious"
Sermon preached on March 18, 1956, at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, AL

Leader

The Lord be with you. **All** And also with you.

Leader

A reading from the sermons of Dr. King.

Yes, there was peace ... but it was peace at a great price:

it was peace that had been purchased at the exorbitant price

of ... succumbing to the whims and caprices of a vicious mob.

It was peace that had been purchased at the price

of allowing mobocracy to reign supreme over de - moc - ra - cy.

It was peace that had been purchased at the price of capitulating to the force of dark-ness.

This is the type of peace that all men of goodwill hate.

It is the type of peace that is ob - nox - ious.

It is the type of peace that stinks in the nostrils of the Almighty God.

In a very profound passage which has been often misunderstood, Jesus utters this: He says,

“Think not that I am come to bring peace. I come not to bring peace but a sword.”

What He is saying is: “I come not to bring this peace of escap - ism,

this peace that fails to confront the real is - sues of life,

the peace that makes for stagnant com - pla - cen - cy.”

Then He says, “I come to bring a sword”: not a phy - si - cal sword.

“Whenever I come, a conflict is precipitated between the old and the new,

between justice and injus - tice, between the forces of light and the forces of dark - ness.

I come to declare war over injust - ice. I come to declare war on e - vil.”

Peace is not merely the absence of some negative force— war, tension, confusion—

but it is the presence of some positive force—

justice, goodwill, the power of the kingdom of God.

Jesus says in substance,

“I will not be content until justice, goodwill, brotherhood, love,

yes, the Kingdom of God are established upon the earth.”

This is real peace: a peace embodied with the presence of positive good.

Leader The Word of the Lord. **All** Thanks be to God.