

1-15-2024

## **One In Christ Jesus**

Joseph Khabbaz

*“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:27–28, ESV)*

**We were made to live together.**

This year will mark the 70th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. accepting the call to pastor Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Although Dr. King preached many powerful sermons at Dexter Avenue that stimulated the intellect and inspired goodwill around the world, his prayers have not received quite the same attention, yet they provide an insightful glimpse into his own heart. On April 7, 1957, he led a prayer asking God for help and guidance in the struggle to overcome the most glaring social evils that afflicted humankind across the globe. Here is the full prayer where he references Ghana’s independence celebration as a new nation:

“O God, our gracious Heavenly Father, help us to see the insights that come from this new nation. Help us to follow Thee and all of Thy creative works in this world. And that somehow we will discover that we are made to live together as brothers. And that it will come in this generation; the day when all men will recognize the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Amen.” [U](#)

His prayer is a reminder that through the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, we are all one unified family in God. Dr. King’s prayer echoes another famous preacher, the apostle Paul of Tarsus. In a letter to the Galatians, Paul is concerned that the Christian message of the gospel has been distorted into one of exclusion rather than inclusion. Although many of the Jews in Galatia refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah, Paul begs the church not to hate or mistreat Jews or any tribe, race, or religion. Why? Because God’s offer of salvation is available to all. Therefore, rejection of our fellow human beings does not give Christians permission to withhold the good news of the gospel.

Through Christ, the standard categories that often divide people do not apply to those in Christ. It is not because distinctions in society do not exist, but rather that distinctions are not the grounds for exclusion from salvation. In Christ, all believers in Him become a single unified family, seeking to serve and glorify Him through His transforming grace.

As we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the Christian ideals he expressed so often, may we more fully experience the oneness of being a child of God. Ellen White writes, “When the Holy Spirit moves upon human minds all petty complaints and accusations between man and his fellow man will be put away. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will shine into the chambers of the mind and heart. In our worship of God there will be no distinction between rich and poor, white and black. All prejudice will be melted away. When we approach God it will be

as one brotherhood.”<sup>[2]</sup> We are made to live together in preparation for that great day when we will worship together in the new Jerusalem. The great news is that through Christ we can experience the joy of heavenly worship on earth as we serve and love others together.

## **REFLECTION**

1. In what ways does Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s prayer on April 7, 1957, reflect the idea that humanity is made to live together as brothers, and how does this resonate with the Christian message of unity in Christ?
2. According to the passage, why does the apostle Paul express concern about the distortion of the Christian message into one of exclusion rather than inclusion? How does this relate to the offer of salvation being available to all?
3. As students, faculty, and staff, how can our prayers and character contribute to living in communities where there is no distinction between individuals based on worldly criteria?

## **PRAYER REQUESTS AND RESOURCES**

- Join us this Friday for **Vespers at 6:30 pm** or at **8:30 pm** in the University Church!
- Find a meaningful sense of belonging by joining a student or faculty/staff LifeGroup today: [click here](#).
- If you are feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.