



Building a Creative Temple, by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Whenever you set out to build a creative temple, whatever it may be, you must face the fact that there is a tension at the heart of the universe between good and evil. Hinduism refers to this as a struggle between illusion and reality. Platonic philosophy used to refer to it as a tension between body and soul. Zoroastrianism, a religion of old, used to refer to it as a tension between the god of light and the god of darkness. Traditional Judaism and Christianity refer to it as a tension between God and Satan. Whatever you call it, there is a struggle in the universe between good and evil.

Now not only is that struggle structured out somewhere in the external forces of the universe, it's structured in our own lives. Psychologists have tried to grapple with it in their way, and so they say various things. Sigmund Freud used to say that this tension is a tension between what he called the id and the superego. Some of us feel that it's a tension between God and man. And in every one of us this morning, there's a war going on. It's a civil war. I don't care who you are, I don't care where you live, there is a civil war going on in your life. And every time you set out to be good, there's something pulling on you, telling you to be evil. It's going on in your life. Every time you set out to love, something keeps pulling on you, trying to get you to hate. Every time you set out to be kind and say nice things about people, something is pulling on you to be jealous and envious and to spread evil gossip about them. There's a civil war going on. There is a schizophrenia, as the psychologists or the psychiatrists would call it, going on within all of us. And there are times that all of us know somehow that there is a Mr. Hyde and a Dr. Jekyll in us. [...] There's a tension at the heart of human nature. And whenever we set out to dream our dreams and to build our temples, we must be honest enough to recognize it.

In the final analysis, God does not judge us by the separate incidents or the separate mistakes that we make, but by the total bent of our lives. In the final analysis, God knows that his children are weak and they are frail. In the final analysis, what God requires is that your heart is right. Salvation isn't reaching the destination of absolute morality, but it's being in the process and on the right road.

And the question I want to raise this morning with you: is your heart right? If your heart isn't right, fix it up today. Get somebody to be able to say about you, "He may not have reached the highest height, he may not have realized all of his dreams, but he tried." Isn't that a wonderful thing for somebody to say about you? "He tried to be a good man. He tried to be a just man. He tried to be an

honest man.Â His heart was in the right place."Â And I can hear a voice saying, crying out through the eternities, "I accept you. You are a recipient of my grace because it was in your heart.Â And it is so well that it was within thine heart."

I donâ€™t know this morning about you, but I can make a testimony.

You

donâ€™t need to go out this morning saying that Martin Luther King is a saint. Oh, no.Â I want you to know this morning that Iâ€™m a sinner like all of Godâ€™s children. But I want to be a good man.Â And I want to hear a voice saying to me one day, "I take you in and I bless you, because you try.Â It is well that it was within thine heart."

--Martin Luther King. Jr.