

January 2005 - Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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By Congressman Jerry Moran

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I am humbled to return to this house of worship, on this special day – a day of remembrance, celebration, and action.

Our world is a troubled place. Our country is at war. Our country is in debt. Some people are hungry, and some need work. We rush aid to those suffering in South Asia, but there remains a feeling of inadequacy, because the damage is done and cannot be undone. If we were only more peaceful, more powerful, stronger, faster, richer – and the list goes on. But we are human – limited in our abilities and flawed by our nature.

Dr. King also saw the flaws in people in his day. He saw injustice and racism. He saw poverty and ignorance. But despite what he saw, he dared to stand and fight. He believed that though humans fall short, the human condition could be changed. By fighting for brotherhood and for equality, he changed his world and ours. That is Dr. King's legacy.

With all the challenges we face, we need a Martin Luther King, Jr. today. Someone who will lead us and speak the truth.

Dr. King's courage to speak the truth came from his faith in God. "I decided early to give my life to something eternal and absolute. Not to these little gods that are here today and gone tomorrow, but to God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Dr. King, in a sermon delivered fifty years ago, tells us how to change our world today:

"If we are to go forward today, we have got to go back and rediscover some precious values that we've left behind…the trouble isn't so much that we don't know enough, but we aren't good enough. So we find ourselves caught in a messed-up world. The problem is with man himself and man's soul. We haven't learned how to be just and honest and kind and true and loving. That's the only way that we would be able to make our world a better world, and to make of this world what God wants it to be…we need to rediscover this: that all reality hinges on moral foundations – that some things are right and some things are wrong."

It is a great honor for me to be a Member of Congress. But I recognize that what happens in Washington, D.C., what happens in Topeka, or what happens even at the Reno County Courthouse pales in comparison to what good can happen when each of us lives our life committed to something eternal and absolute, and when we are willing to stand up for what is right and what is good. What we learn from the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is that an individual can make a

difference when one puts his faith in God and lives a life committed to the unchanging principles that we simply cannot afford to leave behind. Once one commits his or her life to God — there can be no racism, because we know we are all equal, made by God in His image.

Our world, our country, this community, and each individual here today need to go back and rediscover the values of our past. The values of love, respect for others, charity, compassion, honesty, the recognition that people matter more than things, and that some things are right but many things are wrong. What Dr. King said fifty years ago is still true: “the thing we need in the world today is…men and women who will stand for right and goodness.”

I thank God for the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.