Excerpt: “Where Do We Go From Here?”

Address Delivered at the Eleventh Annual SCLC Convention

And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. (*Yes*) And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. (*No*) And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. (*Yes*) For I have seen too much hate. (*Yes*) I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. (*Yeah*) I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate, myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities, and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. (*Yes, That’s right*) I have decided to love. [*applause*] If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we aren't moving wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. (*Yes*) He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.

And so I say to you today, my friends, that you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and angels (All right); you may have the eloquence of articulate speech; but if you have not love, it means nothing. (That's right) Yes, you may have the gift of prophecy; you may have the gift of scientific prediction (Yes sir) and understand the behavior of molecules (All right); you may break into the storehouse of nature (Yes sir) and bring forth many new insights; yes, you may ascend to the heights of academic achievement (Yes sir) so that you have all knowledge (Yes sir, Yes); and you may boast of your great institutions of learning and the boundless extent of your degrees; but if you have not love, all of these mean absolutely nothing. (Yes) You may even give your goods to feed the poor (Yes sir); you may bestow great gifts to charity (Speak); and you may tower high in philanthropy; but if you have not love, your charity means nothing. (Yes sir) You may even give your body to be burned and die the death of a martyr, and your spilt blood may be a symbol of honor for generations yet unborn, and thousands may praise you as one of history's greatest heroes; but if you have not love (Yes, All right), your blood was spilt in vain. What I'm trying to get you to see this morning is that a man may be self-centered in his self-denial and self-righteous in his self-sacrifice. His generosity may feed his ego, and his piety may feed his pride. (Speak) So without love, benevolence becomes egotism, and martyrdom becomes spiritual pride.