

Rediscovering Lost Values

Martin Luther King Jr. Speech, Feb 28 1954

Reverend Simmons, platform associates, members and friends of Second Baptist Church, I need not pause to say how happy I am to be here this morning, and to be a part of this worship service. It is certainly with a deal of humility that I stand in this pulpit so rich in tradition and history. Second Baptist Church, as you know, has the reputation of being one of the great churches of our nation, and it is certainly a challenge that, for me to stand here this morning, to be in the pulpit of Reverend Banks and of a people who are so great and rich in tradition.

I'm not exactly a stranger in the city of Detroit, for I have been here several times before. And I remember back in about 1944 or 1945, somewhere back in there, that I came to Second Baptist Church for the first time—I think that was the year that the National Baptist Convention met here. And of course I have a lot of relatives in this city, so that Detroit is really something of a second home for me, and I don't feel too much a stranger here this morning. So it is indeed a pleasure and a privilege for me to be in this city this morning, and to be here to worship with you in the absence of your very fine and noble pastor, Dr. Banks.

I want you to think with me this morning from the subject: "Rediscovering Lost Values." "Rediscovering Lost Values." There is something wrong with our world, something fundamentally and basically wrong. I don't think we have to look too far to see that. I'm sure that most of you would agree with me in making that assertion. And when we stop to analyze the cause of our world's ills, many things come to mind.

We begin to wonder if it is due to the fact that we don't know enough. But it can't be that. Because in terms of accumulated knowledge we know more today than men have known in any period of human history. We have the facts at our disposal. We know more about mathematics, about science, about social science, and philosophy than we've ever known in any period of the world's history. So it can't be because we don't know enough.

And then we wonder if it is due to the fact that our scientific genius lags behind. That is, if we have not made enough progress scientifically. Well then, it can't be that. For our scientific progress over the past years has been amazing. Man through his scientific genius has been able to dwarf distance and place time in chains, so that today it's possible to eat breakfast in New York City and supper in London, England. Back in about 1753 it took a letter three days to go from New York City to Washington, and today you can go from here to China in less time than that. It can't be because man is stagnant in his scientific progress. Man's scientific genius has been amazing.

I think we have to look much deeper than that if we are to find the real cause of man's problems and the real cause of the world's ills today. If we are to really find it I think we will have to look in the hearts and souls of men.