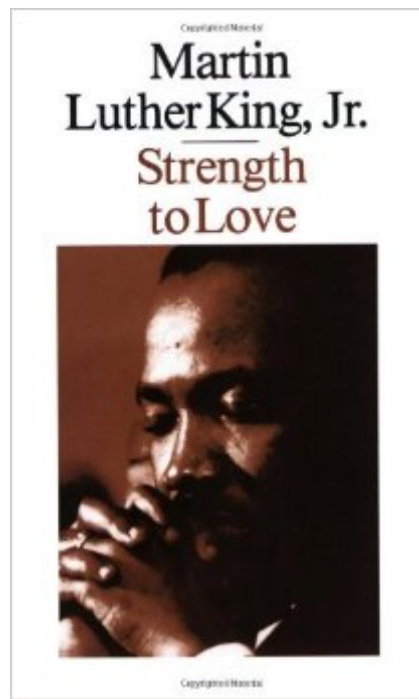


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# Strength To Love



## Synopsis

This is the classic collection of sermons preached by Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Fortress Pr; New edition edition (May 1981)

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (104 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Because of his inspiring leadership during the United States civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and because he was assassinated while serving in that capacity, Martin Luther King, Jr., has become an iconic figure in popular culture. And I fear that King the "legend" has become so big that people may be paying insufficient attention to King the writer. If you want to experience King's insight and power as a writer, read "Strength to Love." This collection of sermons is an excellent summation of the philosophy he developed as a Christian clergyman, social critic, and advocate for the African-American community. Most of the sermons in the book begin with a Bible verse which ties in to the theme of each sermon. One of the main themes of the collection as a whole is King's passionate denunciation of racial prejudice and of the tangible injustice that springs from that phenomenon. King is also very critical of those sectors of the Christian world that have historically used the Bible and Christian theology as tools for promoting slavery, American racial segregation, and South African apartheid. Indeed, in the sermon entitled "A knock at midnight" he refers to the Christian churches' historic support of racism as one of "the shameful tragedies of history." And he is also critical of those Black churches that have reduced Christianity to either a frenzied form of "entertainment" or a snobbish social club. These are hard words that contemporary Christians need to hear and heed. King's own vision of Christianity is bold and revolutionary. And this vision is firmly

grounded in the person of Jesus, whom he describes as "the world's most dedicated nonconformist.

In the popular eye, Martin Luther King, Jr. is best known for his work in the Civil Rights struggle during the 1950s and 1960s; his public speeches and public acts are part of the general pattern of American history. However, his ability at public speaking came largely from his experience as a preacher in Black church - the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had a 'day job' as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, and as part of this task, he regularly delivered sermons to his congregation. This is a collection of 15 sermons, illustrating major points of King's theology and sense of social justice. This book has a foreword by King's daughter, Coretta Scott King, who speaks of this book as one that is most influential to others - the primary feature of King's theology and practice, nonviolence, is contained here. King's sense of justice, the love of the divine, the interconnectedness of all peoples in the human community, and King's ultimate sense of optimism come through the powerful words of these sermons. King's words often take conventional phrases and ideas and bring out new meanings. King's ideas of the practical meaning of being a nonconformist, or of loving one's enemies, put new interpretations on these ideas. King talks of the difficulty of being a nonconformist, and the echoes of the Transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau are present, as are theologians such as Niebuhr. King does not speak of the kind of simple nonconformity that typifies teen-age rebellion and angst (which is, in itself a very conformist kind of nonconformity), but rather a working against the prevailing norms of society toward a transformation in love and furtherance of the gospel message.

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