

## Readings

### **Thomas, Verses 3, 97 & 113**

If those who lead you proclaim to you: “The kingdom of God is in the sky,” then the birds of the sky will enter before you. If they proclaim to you: “It is in the sea,” then the fish will enter before you. Rather the realm is within you and outside of you.

The kingdom of God is compared to a woman carrying a jar filled with flour. While she was walking on the road, a ways out, the handle of the jar broke. The flour emptied out along the road, but she did not realize it or recognize a problem.

The kingdom will not come by looking for it. It will not be a matter of saying, “Here it is!” or “Look! There it is.” Rather the kingdom of God is spread out upon the earth but people don’t see it.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Excerpt from “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”**

“But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.”