

Significance of king's i have a dream

[History](#), [American History](#)



There is no doubt that Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech is iconic to all Americans. However, did Dr. King's speech have a profound impact on race relations fifty-six years later? Race relations have not gotten better since Dr. King delivered his memorable speech to a massive group of civil rights marchers gathered around the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. King urged America to "make real the promises of democracy" (Martin Luther King, page 41) but what has occurred since then is far from it.

Physical violence towards African Americans is still a natural occurrence, African Americans are being incarcerated in mass numbers, and poverty still exists in their communities. A total lack of will to stop prejudice in America has caused such issues to persist many years later. Physical violence towards African Americans cannot go unnoticed in the years that followed the speech. Dr. King urged Americans to not "allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence" (Martin Luther King, page 42). That wish turned into a fantasy less than three decades later after L. A. riots sprung into action. Protests erupted after police officers were caught beating an unarmed African American motorist (History). After the verdict was announced the outraged quickly turned into riots that left many African Americans either dead or badly injured (History).

The riots were a great demonstration of violence that Dr. King hoped to avoid. He put great emphasis to rise against injustice through "soul force" instead of the physical force that many people from both sides of accustomed to (Martin Luther King, page 42). More recently, in 2014 Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri (Susan McGraugh, 2015). After the grand jury decided to not indict the officer, <https://assignbuster.com/significance-of-kings-i-have-a-dream/>

protests began in major U. S metropolitan cities (Susan McGraugh, 2015). After more cases of police brutality, the black lives matter movement was started to stop the violence against African Americans. The same trends of physical violence with police officers seem to persist throughout American history. Dr. King said in his speech that people should “ never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality” (Martin Luther King, page 42).

The rise of many movements shows that race relations have not gotten better since Dr. King emphasized the importance of taking action against police brutality. Many African Americans get wrongful convictions; due to the physical confrontation that African Americans are subject to, mass incarceration becomes extremely problematic for the black community because it limits their opportunity to grow as individuals and as a community. Dr. King wished for unalienable rights in his speech. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (Martin Luther King, page 41).

His wishes are not granted after the mass incarceration of African Americans. Mass incarceration refers to extreme rates of imprisonment that convicts are subject to. Even though African Americans make up a small portion of the population, they represent nearly half of the U. S prison population (NAACP, Criminal Justice Fact Sheet). That was definitely not Dr. King's dream, for many people, Dr. King's dream is only an elusive hope. There is a myriad of reasons to explain this injustice but the one that surfaces is the fact that in the U. S racism still exists and it creates unstable race relations. Similarly, whites and African Americans use drugs at similar rates, but the

imprisonment of African Americans is six times that of the white (NAACP, Criminal Justice Fact Sheet).

The main takeaways are that prejudice exists in America and it's deeply woven in legal system. Therefore, the criminal justice system should be questioned for its legitimacy. Since many African Americans are put into prison, they will have criminal records once they leave prison which will make it extremely difficult for them to find a job. According to NAACP, a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a callback or a job offer by 50%. The consequence of not finding a job leaves and will continue to leave many African Americans with poverty-stricken lives. On a more economic side, African Americans are still poverty-stricken more than ever. One of the reasons for this is the fact that African American's hourly earnings are far less than what white people earned (Mary C. Daly, Bart Hobijn, Joseph H. Pedtke, 2017).

An ongoing study found that black men specifically, see substantially less mobility than their white counterparts, even after controlling how long they worked in a day, family structure, and a large group of different factors (Daly, M. C., Hobijn, B., & Pedtke, J. H, 2017). That could help clarify how African American laborers remain so behind. Dr. King said in his speech that African Americans live "on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity" (Martin Luther King, page 41). Dr. King delivered a truthful realization, with that being said, African Americans still fall behind even though the world has progressed economically since then.

Historically, unemployment is almost twice as bad for African Americans compared to the white community (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).

Racism is likely at play in that situation. In a study it was found that when everything is equal in the job market but the applicant's name is changed to a stereotypical black as opposed to a stereotypical white name, the whites names were " 50% more likely to elicit positive responses from employers" (Devah Pager, 2007). It goes without saying that poverty is still a crucial issue nowadays for the African American community as it was fifty-six years ago when Dr. King delivered his speech. The wish Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his " I have a dream" speech for a better tomorrow is yet to be fulfilled. All those years later, race relations still haven't gotten better because violence between African Americans and the police is a major issue that is leaving many innocent African Americans incarcerated. As a result, it is more difficult for them to find employment to flee poverty and spiral up to financial freedom. History tends to repeat itself and nothing comes closer to the truth as African American's continues suffering for generations. Most of the conflicts are derived from prejudice towards people of color.